NATION

More protests, bandh in HP over 'illegal' mosques

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Govt's subsidised onion sale brings relief to cities

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

ISL: Venkatesh's goal helps BFC edge past East Bengal

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 15 SEPTEMBER 2024 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 10 RABI'L, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 234 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

REPORTERS
WEB-EDITOR
SUB-EDITOR

Journalism degree preferred but not essential.
Reporter: 5-6 years experience.
Web-editor: 2-4 years experience.
Sub editors freshers welcome.

SEND YOUR CV TO:
hr.salarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

Docs reach Didi's home for talks, told to leave abruptly

Docs asked to leave despite relenting on live meet demand

WB CM Mamata Banerjee during a meeting with junior doctors delegation, at her Kalighat residence in Kolkata, Saturday; Mamata speaks to the delegation of junior doctors **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The standoff between West Bengal government and the protesting doctors continued on Saturday as the agitators refused to enter Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence in the absence of a live telecast.

The agitating doctors claimed that they were asked to leave the venue "unceremoniously" despite relenting on their live-streaming demand.

Speaking with doctors outside her residence, Mamata Banerjee, "We will video-record the meeting to end RG Kar impasse and will provide it to you after the Supreme Court's nod." She asserted that they "cannot keep insulting her."

Before leaving the gates of the CM's residence, where the talks were scheduled to be held, an agitating doctor told reporters they had agreed to attend the meeting without live-streaming or video recording, as requested by Banerjee.

"When we came here, we had demanded video recording or live-streaming of the talks. We were not allowed. Then the chief minister came out and appealed to us to join the talks, promising that we would receive the minutes of the meeting. We discussed among ourselves and agreed to join the meeting without live-streaming or video recording," the doctor said. "When we conveyed this to Minister of State for Health Chandrima Bhattacharya, we were told to leave the venue because it was too late and they had been waiting for us for three hours. We were unceremoniously asked to leave," the doctor added.

Breaking down in tears before the camera, another doctor said this incident reflected the "true intentions" of the state government. Earlier on in the day, Mamata made a sudden visit to the dharna site of the junior doctors, where she stated that if the agitators could trust her, she would be ready to consider their demands, but that she needs time.

CBI charges Ghosh with rape

In a significant development, CBI slapped charges of rape and murder charges against former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh, currently in judicial custody in a corruption case, an official of the probe agency said.

The agency also arrested Abhijit Mondal, the officer in charge of Tala Police Station, for his alleged involvement in the rape and murder of an on-duty woman medic in the RG Kar Hospital, he said. The hospital is under the jurisdiction of Tala Police Station. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

BOOKED FOR CASTEIST SLURS

BJP's Munirathna arrested for death threat to contractor

BENGALURU/KOLAR, 14 SEPT

Munirathna **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

BJP MLA Munirathna was arrested on Saturday in the two FIRs filed against him for alleged harassment, threats and casteist abuse, police said.

The cases against the Rajarajeshwarinagar MLA were filed at Vyalikaval police station on Friday, they said.

Citing violation of party discipline, the State BJP has issued a show cause notice to Munirathna asking him to clarify allegations against him before the disciplinary committee within five days.

Munirathna who went missing after FIRs were registered was reportedly planning to escape to Andhra Pradesh before Kolar police arrested him. Kolar SP B Nikhil said the entire operation was done in coordination with Bengaluru police and was able to nab him in 20 minutes. In the first FIR filed by BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) contractor, Cheluvaraju, he accused the MLA of demanding Rs 30 lakh as a bribe and threatening to terminate his contract if he did not pay the amount.

In his complaint, he alleged that initially, Munirathna had demanded Rs 20 lakh in 2021 from him over a solid waste disposal contract. However, despite making that payment for getting 10 auto trippers for a waste management contract, he was not sanctioned those vehicles by the civic body.

According to FIR, Cheluvaraju was being repatedly harassed by the MLA who allegedly verbally abused him and also physically assaulted him. In the complaint, he further alleged that the MLA had even slapped him in September 2023. Along with the MLA, three others, including government officials, were also named in the FIR.

The second FIR has been filed against the MLA on the complaint of a BBMP corporator who alleged that the MLA hurled casteist abuse, insulted his caste and family. The MLA allegedly asked Chaluvaraju not to associate himself with the corporator because of his caste. Taking a dig at BJP, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah took to 'X' and alleged "leaders @BJP4Karnataka who talk about rituals and culture first clean the mouth of your MLA Munirathna and tell the town. BJP's slogan that we are all Hindus is only limited to election". —*Salar News with agencies*

>>>More on Page 2

K'taka gears up for 2,500km-long human chain

HULUNBUIR, 14 SEPT

Karnataka is geared up for the "ambitious" 2,500km-long human chain to mark the 'International Day of Democracy' on 15 September. The massive human chain is planned across the entire state from Bidar to Chamarajanagar, covering all 31 districts. The State government is taking the lead in organising the event to mark the day in association with civil society, officials said on Saturday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is scheduled to join the human chain in front of Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and Secretariat here, official sources said. —*PTI*

Death of man in Kerala suspected due to Nipah

MALAPPURAM, 14 SEPT

A recent death of a man in Malappuram district of the state is reportedly suspected to have been due to Nipah infection. When contacted, a health official of the district confirmed that a sample was sent for testing to the Kozhikode Medical College, but said the results were not yet available. The official also confirmed that the patient died on 9 September. The samples were sent for testing after that. A boy from Malappuram, who was undergoing treatment for Nipah infection, had died on 21 July. —*PTI*

3 killed, 7 feared trapped after home collapses in UP

RAIPUR, 14 SEPT

Three people were killed, two injured and seven feared trapped after a three-storey house collapsed in this Uttar Pradesh district on Saturday, officials said. "Twelve people got buried under the debris after the sudden collapse of the house. Till now, five people have been taken out from the debris. Of them, three died and two injured have been admitted to Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Medical College," the relief commissioner's office said. The incident occurred around 5.15 pm and emergency services were immediately alerted, it said. District Magistrate Deepak Meena confirmed the collapse of the three-storey house in Zakir Colony. Officials initially said around six people were trapped under the debris. —*PTI*

Yadgir Dalits boycotted for Pocso case on youth

YADGIR, 14 SEPT

Dalit families of a village in Yadgir district are allegedly facing social boycott after a person from the community lodged a POCSO complaint against an 'upper caste' youth, police said on Saturday.

The complaint was lodged in August after a minor girl was allegedly impregnated by a 20-year-old man belonging to an upper caste of the same village near Hunasagi taluk, they said.

Since the girl belongs to lower caste, the man refused to marry her and also threatened the family not to disclose it. A section of villagers have allegedly decided to boycott the members of the Dalit community after the victim's family failed to reach a compromise. On Friday, a peace committee meeting was organised by district officials and all the differences were sorted out.

A case was registered under sections of rape, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act against the accused. The man was arrested and sent to judicial custody, he added. —*PTI*

In a 1st, PM campaigns in J&K's Doda; attacks Oppn

JAMMU, 14 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the upcoming assembly election is a contest between the young leadership devoted to Jammu and Kashmir's development and the three dynastic families that "destroyed" the region by "encouraging" corruption and "depriving" the people of their rights.

His visit to Doda will mark the first visit to the region by an Indian Prime Minister in 42 years.

This was the first election rally by Modi in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the first phase of the assembly polls on September 18, which will cover 24 seats spread across the three districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban in Jammu and the south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam.

Addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidates in Doda district of Jammu region, Modi said terrorism is taking its last breath and reiterated his government's promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

However, he cautioned the people against bringing the NC, Congress and the PDP back to power. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

PM Narendra Modi during a public meeting ahead of the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

HAPPY ONAM

People prepare pookkalam (floral carpet) in Thrissur's Vadakkunnathan Temple to celebrate Onam, on Saturday **PHOTO: X/@VISWAGURU1964**

MP stops meat, liquor in holy cities

BHOPAL, 14 SEPT

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has asked officials to ensure meat and liquor are not consumed in and around religious towns located along the Narmada river, considered the lifeline of the state.

There are 21 districts, 68 tehsils, 1138 villages and 1126 ghats as well as 430 ancient Shiva temples and two 'shakti peeths' along the banks of the river. Chairing a meeting of officials on Friday, Yadav also said Amarkantak in Anuppur district, from where the Narmada originates, must be given top priority for environmental protection. "Future settlements, land should be identified away from the Narmada river's origin and a satellite city should be developed. Of the river's 1312 kilometres, a dominant 1,079 km is in Madhya Pradesh. —*PTI*

'NOT A CONTRACT'

Hindu marriages cannot be dissolved: HC

PRAYAGRAJ, 14 SEPT

Allahabad High Court, in a significant judgement, has ruled that a Hindu marriage is not to be dissolved or terminated as a contract.

The sacrament based Hindu marriage may be dissolved (in law), in limited circumstances and too only on the strength of evidence led by the parties, it said.

Allowing the appeal filed by a wife against dissolution of marriage, a division bench of justices Saumitra Dayal Singh and Donadi Ramesh was of the view that even in "granting the divorce on the strength of mutual consent, the learned court below may have dissolved the marriage between the parties only in the event of that consent continuing to exist on the date of the order being passed".

The appeal was filed by the woman against a judgement passed by Additional district judge of Bulandshahar in 2011 allowing divorce petition (plaint) on behalf of her husband.

The two got married on 2 February, 2006. At that time, the man was employed with the Indian Army. According to the plaint allegations, the woman deserted her husband in 2007.

In 2008, the husband filed a petition for dissolution of marriage.

Allahabad High Court **PHOTO: ANI**

The wife filed her written statement and said she is living with her father. In mediation proceedings, the estranged couple expressed their view to live separately. However, during the pendency of the suit, the woman changed her view and contested the suit denying allegations made against her on which a second mediation was preferred but it also failed because her husband refused to keep her with him.

However, in mediation before Army authorities, they became ready to live with each other and two children also born in between.

Mahesh Sharma, appearing on behalf of the woman, had submitted before the court that all these documents and developments were brought before the court in divorce proceeding but the court in its order allowed the divorce petition only on basis of the first written statement filed on behalf of the woman which was challenged before high court. —*PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Students must work on interpersonal skills, says Sudha

MYSURU, 14 SEPT

Rajya Sabha member Sudha Murty on Saturday urged college students to improve their interpersonal skills along with obtaining degrees. Besides learning English, the students should also learn Kannada and give importance to their mother tongue as they are important for developing a sound personality, the writer said while releasing a revised Kannada Encyclopaedia brought out by University of Mysore and interacting with students and academicians at Crawford Hall in the city. On the job threat caused by artificial intelligence and other new technologies, she said there was a similar kind of fear that existed among the people when computers were invented by the scientists. However, the advent of computers provided jobs to millions of people across the world. People must embrace such new technologies, she said. *—Salar News*

Chikkaballapur woman delivers baby in ambulance

GUDIBANDE, 14 SEPT

A pregnant woman delivered a baby boy in an ambulance on the way to the hospital yesterday in Gudibande taluk, Chikkaballapur district. According to Shanthi, the nurse who assisted with the delivery, the 108 ambulance service received a call around 8.30am requesting assistance to transport the woman to the hospital. As the ambulance, staffed by Nurse Shanthi and driver Maruthi, arrived at Doddanancherlu village in Gudibande taluk, the woman began experiencing labour pains. Shanthi, who is attached to the ambulance service, confirmed that it was the woman's second child, and the delivery was normal. The baby weighed about 2kg at birth. Both the mother and child were then taken to the Government Hospital in Gudibande. *—Salar News*

Gambling addict nabbed in City for stealing gold, cash

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

A 22-year-old online gambling addict was arrested for allegedly stealing gold valued at Rs 7 lakh and Rs 45,000 in cash from his house at Virat Nagar in Bommanahalli. Bommanahalli police arrested Aditya from Yelahanka Railway Station when he was trying to flee the City on Friday. Aditya's parents had stored gold and cash in a safe at their home for his brother's wedding, police said. When the parents went out to distribute wedding invitations, Aditya broke the safe and stole the valuables on Thursday. The parents lodged a complaint with police, suspecting their son as he was gambling addict and that he was missing from home. Bommanahalli police with the help of informants and using technical evidence nabbed the accused. *—Salar News*

Minister hints at imminent hike in milk prices in K'taka

CM has ordered increased profits be given to farmers

TUMAKURU, 14 SEPT

Karnataka Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna on Saturday hinted at an imminent hike in milk prices.

He said that a meeting would be called soon to decide on this.

"I have brought to the notice of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah that in the entire country there is no state that procures milk from farmers at a lower price than us. Similarly there is no state that sells the milk to consumers at a lower price than us," Rajanna said.

"We procure milk at Rs 31 per litre and after installing

KN Rajanna PHOTO: FB

National Dairy Development Board's (NDDB) software, farmers may be getting Rs 2 per litre more, on an average Rs 31. We sell it at Rs 45 per litre...but no state in the country procures at Rs 31 and sells at Rs 45. In other states they sell at Rs 58-60 (per litre)."

"I brought this to the notice of Siddaramaiah and requested that -- after looking at the prices in other states, fix the procurement and selling price at the same level. In that case, the difference was about Rs 10 per litre. He said if the price is hiked so much, people will not keep quiet, but I convinced him to look at the welfare of rural people (largely farmers)," he said. Noting that there is thinking to increase the price at which milk is procured from farmers, the minister said, Siddaramaiah has said that the increased amount should completely be passed on to famers. Siddaramaiah had also hinted at a hike in milk prices. Noting that there has been a demand for increasing the price of milk by Rs 5 per litre, he said a meeting will be called soon to take a decision on increasing the milk price in the interest of the farmers.

Rajanna said, if transaction of money increases in the villages, the country's GDP could increase. "The hike will not give even Rs 1 profit to the state government, it would rather benefit the Centre as the unions will make a profit and pay higher taxes," he said. *—PTI*

HARASSMENT CASE

Congress & Dalit activists protest against Munirathna

MYSURU/BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Hundreds of Dalit activists, Congress workers led by former MLA MK Somashekhar and former mayor Purushottam held a protest at Ballal Circle here against BJP MLA Munirathna for his alleged casteist abuse, harassment, bribe demands and threats to a BBMP contractor. The protesters also formed a human chain seeking BJP high command to expel him from the party. Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson M Lakshmana on Saturday said he will file a complaint against the MLA with Home Minister G Parameshwara as well as with Governor. He accused the MLA for insulting the Vokkaliga woman also.

Munirathna PHOTO: X

Munirathna is a disgrace: Congress MLC Sudam Das

Congress MLC Sudam Das has called the actions of BJP MLA Munirathna, who was arrested on charges of making a death threat to a contractor and using casteist slurs against him, a "disgrace".

"The dark face of 'Mani' Ratna commission was revealed earlier when the contractors' association complained about harassment. Now, there is clear evidence of Munirathna's corruption," Das said during a press conference at Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee office. He said, "Munirathna insulted Chaluvaraju with unspeakable words, using his caste. He asked for photos of his wife and even made objectionable remarks. BJP leaders like Munirathna view women as objects to be used and discarded. They think Dalits can be spoken to however they please. The entire political system should bow down in shame, but it's a tragedy that BJP has no shame," the MLC said.

BJP MLA should apologise: DK Suresh

Congress leader DK Suresh has demanded the dismissal of Munirathna and an apology from BJP. "Rajarajeshwari MLA (Munirathna) has used such a low-level language and he has insulted Dalit community. BJP national leaders should answer this. He had earlier also looked down on the Vokkaliga community," he said.

—Salar News with Agencies

Girl, man found hanging from tree

SIDLAGATTA, 14 SEPT

A minor girl and a 22-year-old man were found dead, hanging from the same branch of a tree near Beeraganapalli in Sidlagatta taluk, which falls under the jurisdiction of Sidlagatta Rural Police, on Saturday morning. The girl was a high school student, and the man Naveen, worked as a car driver. The girl's parents had filed a missing person. Both individuals were later traced, and POCSO case was filed against Naveen. *—Salar News*

Situation in violence-hit Nagamangala peaceful: HM

G Parameshwara PHOTO: FB

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday said the situation in violence-hit Nagamangala town in Mandya district is peaceful now, and steps have been taken to ensure that no untoward incidents take place.

Clashes had broken out between two groups during the Ganesh idol procession in the town, following which mobs went on a rampage with stone pelting and targeting several shops and vehicles leading to tension on Wednesday night.

About 55 people have been arrested in connection with the incident and they have been sent to judicial custody, according to police sources.

Responding to a question on Opposition parties including JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy raising doubts about the FIR, he said, "the police will do what has to be done with law..."

Asked about BJP sending a fact finding team to Nagamangala, the Home Minister said, "let them find the facts and inform us, and if there is any fact from their fact finding, we will look into it. It will make our work a bit easier." *—PTI*

STATE TO COMPENSATE SHOP OWNERS HIT BY CLASHES

MYSURU, 14 SEPT

State government will give compensation to shop owners and others who suffered a loss in the clashes at Nagamangala in Mandya district, said District In-charge Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy on Saturday.

After participating in a peace meeting held at Nagamangala, Cheluvarayaswamy said even though there is no provision to distribute compensation under the law in such cases, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah agreed to announce the compensation after he convinced him.

The compensation will be distributed after officials submit a report on the losses suffered due to the clashes, he said.

The minister said he is currently focused on restoring peace, and normalcy in the town and also to unite people of all faiths. Cheluvarayaswamy said he asked police to drop the innocent people from the FIRs.

In the peace meeting with residents, Kempamma, a resident of Badri Koppal, expressed her anger at the minister for arresting his innocent son, Srinivas. She said police dragged his son on the night of the violence even though he was not involved. She asked the minister to release his son and stop arresting the innocent people. *—Salar News*

WAVES OF PROTEST

Bengaluru residents protest against Kolkata doctor's alleged rape and murder at Freedom Park on Saturday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

The incident took place on Kathriguppe Road PHOTO: SALAR

In a viral video, City woman faces rape threat on road

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

A City woman took to social media on how she received "open rape and death threats" from an auto-rickshaw driver. The woman alleged man-made obscene gestures about her and her mother. She alleged that while she was recording the whole incident the man threatened to throw acid on her face if she shared the video online. The incident took place on Kathriguppe Road. After the video went viral the City police nabbed the auto-rickshaw driver for reckless driving and launched a hunt to arrest the man who issued threats to the woman driver. The incident occurred when the auto-rickshaw driver deviated from the left to the right side, nearly causing traffic. Police informed the woman kept her calm but the auto driver got off at the signal and began hurling abuses at her. The man who did not seem to be in his senses attempted to break her car window and tried to force her to open the door while threatening her with death and rape and warned her to delete the video of his behaviour. *—Salar News*

KPCC to change block, dist presidents

MANGALURU, 14 SEPT

The block level and District Congress Committee presidents in the State will be changed in the next one month for better reach into society and bring in organisational fortification, said Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee working president GC Chandrasheker on Saturday.

The All India Congress Committee and KPCC have a vision for bringing a change in how the party works with the last man and woman in the State, he said.

"We are looking at bringing development models into the state with a new vision. We are a party that likes to work with the opposition in the developmental aspects and keep all other matters away that do not relate to the development of the State.

Chandrasheker, who is also a Rajya Sabha member, said that he and his four colleagues of the rank of working presidents of the KPCC are going to every district to infuse the new thinking in our workers and leaders.

When asked about the reason for the changes, Chandrashekar said most of the people have already lived their tenures.

The party wants to reward those who have not been given tickets to contest in the 2023 state assembly elections and 2024 Lok Sabha elections for political reasons.

The other two working presidents, Dr Manjunath Bhandary and Vasanth Kumar, were also present at the press conference. *—PTI*

Mahila Congress launches website, membership drive

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Marking 40 years since it was founded by former prime minister Indira Gandhi in Bengaluru, Mahila Congress launched a membership campaign and a website for registration at KPCC office off Queens Road here on Saturday.

The launch of the website (https://join.aimc.in) is part of All India Mahila Congress' national campaign, which demands the immediate implementation of the women's reservation law, financial independence for women through monthly cash assistance, and stronger measures for women's safety. The membership registration will start at 11am on Sunday. A fee of Rs 100 has to be paid for the 5-year membership.

Sowmya Reddy, President of Karnataka Mahila Congress, said, "Our goal is to ensure every woman in Karnataka, from rural areas to urban centres, has the opportunity to voice their concerns and play an active role in shaping the future of our State." *—Salar News*

HC slams delay in POCSO case trial

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

State High Court has said that the entire criminal justice system was put to shame as the trial in a case of rape and murder of a five-year-old girl has been pending for seven years.

Justice M Nagaprasanna observed that delay in such cases, where the offences are heinous based on facts that are 'horrendous', is a sad reflection of the legal and judicial system. *—PTI*

CM built house on site issued to disabled Dalits, says HDK

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Union Minister and JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy on Saturday accused Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of building a house illegally on a site allotted to a Dalit with a disability during his tenure as the deputy chief minister.

He said the allegations against the Chief Minister regarding illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife in a layout by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA, were not the only ones committed by Siddaramaiah in Mysuru.

He said, "A Dalit, who is handicapped, had paid Rs 24,000 to MUDA and the site was allotted to him, but in that place, by creating false documents in the name of Sakamma, you took 10,000 sq ft from Sakamma and constructed the house." *—PTI*

ON THE BATTLEFRONT

Three Kalaburagi men's journey to Russia-Ukraine war and back

DANIEL GEORGE
BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

Three youths from Kalaburagi, who were caught in the deadly crossfire of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, are finally home after nine harrowing months. Treated like slaves and forced to survive on meagre rations, their ordeal came to an end when the Indian government intervened.

Syed Ilias Hussaini, 21, Mohammed Sameer Ahmed, 21, and Abdul Nayoom, 22, were rescued from Russia, where they had been unknowingly drafted into the private Wagner army.

The trio arrived home late on Friday night, grateful for their second chance at life.

Lured by false promises

The three men had been working at Dubai Airport when they came across an advertisement offering security guard jobs in Russia with a tempting monthly salary of Rs 2 lakh. They applied, paid agents Rs 3.5 lakh, and flew to Russia via Chennai on 18 December, 2023. "We had no idea we were walking into a trap," Hussaini told Salar News from Kalaburagi. "We were tricked by a fraudulent agent and forced into joining the Wagner army to fight against Ukraine."

On the frontlines

The reality they encountered was far from what they had imagined. "We landed in hell," Hussaini said. The youths were woken up at 6am every day, and forced to work 15-hour shifts without rest. "Even if we tried to close our eyes for a second, they would shoot at us to make us get back to digging trenches or firing at enemy lines. My hands are still covered in blisters, and we suffer from severe back pain."

Having never handled a gun before, they were quickly trained to use Kalashnikov rifles, hand grenades, and other explosives. "We were forced to dig trenches and fire assault rifles. There are still many Indian youths who remain trapped there," Hussaini said.

Kalaburagi natives Syed Iliyas Hussaini, Mohammed Sameer Ahmed, and Abdul Nayoom on arrival at Hyderabad Airport on Friday PHOTO: SALAR

Cut off from the world

The Wagner soldiers took away their phones, leaving them isolated from their families.

"We had no idea where we were," Ahmed said. "But we managed to sneak in a call to one of our families."

Their fate took a darker turn when their friend, Hamil, a native of Gujarat, was killed in a drone strike. Shaken by his death, the trio informed their families of the conditions they were living in. Their families, along with well-wishers, started reaching out to Indian government and others for help.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to Russia in July, raised the issue of youths with President Vladimir Putin. Soon after, the Indian Embassy in Moscow coordinated with the Russian military to ensure the safe return of the young men. "We never thought we would make it home," Ahmed said. "We thank Prime Minister Modi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Minister Priyank Kharge for their efforts in saving us."

Now safely back in India, the trio is beginning to recover from their traumatic experience. "We thank God that we are finally home," said Hussaini. "After nine months, we had the best meal of our lives and slept peacefully for the first time without the sound of grenades or gunfire." *—Salar News*

5 Assam Cong MLAs served showcause notices

GUWAHATI, 14 SEPT

Assam Congress on Saturday issued show cause notices to five senior party members, including three MLAs and its women wing president, on charges of indulging in anti-party activities during the last Lok Sabha elections. The disciplinary action committee (DAC) of the party, which issued the notices, has given seven days to the respondents for their replies, a press statement said. MLAs Abdur Rashid Mondol, Rekibuddin Ahmed and Bharat Chandra Narah are among the five leaders who were asked to reply to the notices. State Mahila Congress chief Mira Barthakur, who was the party's candidate for the Guwahati seat, and Samsuddin Barlaskar, president of Hailakandi District Committee, have also been issued notices. *—PTI*

Haryana: Cong's Gehlot, Maken to be poll observers

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Congress on Saturday named Ashok Gehlot, Ajay Maken and Partap Singh Bajwa as the AICC senior observers for the October 5 assembly elections in Haryana. The party has announced the names of 89 candidates for the Haryana polls and left one seat, Bhiwani, for the CPI(M). A statement by the Congress said party president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Gehlot, Maken and Bajwa as senior observers for the Haryana polls. While Maken is the party's treasurer, Gehlot is a former chief minister of Rajasthan and Bajwa is the Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab assembly. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Congress MLA Zubair Khan dies at 62

JAIPUR, 14 SEPT

Four-time Congress MLA from Alwar's Ramgarh seat, Zubair Khan, breathed his last in Alwar on Saturday morning. Khan, 62, was sick for some time. Khan's wife Shafia Zubair informed that he breathed his last at 5.50 am. She said that Khan's funeral (or 'janazah') will take place in Ramgarh, Alwar, this evening. Governor Haribhau Bagade, Chief Minister Bhajanalal Sharma, Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani, PCC Chief Govind Dotasra, former chief minister Ashok Gehlot, former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot and several other leaders expressed condolences on Khan's demise. With Khan's death, the number of Congress MLAs in the assembly has reduced to 65. Seven seats in the house of 200 are now vacant. *—PTI*

MP CM seeks Cong's apology over money for-posts charge

BHOPAL, 14 SEPT

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Saturday demanded an apology from Congress over party leader Jitu Patwari's allegation about officials paying BJP government money for favourable postings. At a public meeting of Congress's "Kisan Nyay Yatra" on Friday, state Congress Chief Patwari alleged that the collector of Hoshangabad (Narmadapuram) had paid money to buy the post. "I would like to tell journalists that there should be an honest sting operation on the collector of Hoshangabad (Narmadapuram). He will reveal how much money he spent to buy the post. The superintendent of police, tehsildar, patwari, SDM, and in-charge of police stations, wnot a single officer or employee gets a police station or posting (without offering money). This is the BJP government's reality," he claimed. *—PTI*

Terrorism breathing its last in J&K: PM

Modi claims that his new leadership will counter dynastic politics that destroyed J&K

JAMMU, 14 SEPT

Asserting that terrorism is taking its last breath in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his government projected new leadership to counter dynastic politics that has destroyed "this beautiful region".

Addressing a massive election rally in support of BJP candidates in Doda district of Jammu region, Modi also reiterated his government's promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and cautioned people against bringing the NC, Congress and the PDP back to power.

This was the first election rally by the prime minister in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the first phase of the assembly polls on September 18, which will cover 24 seats spread across the three districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban in Jammu and the south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian.

Modi began his nearly 45-minute speech by welcoming the people who attended the rally in the Kashmiri language.

"This time, the (assembly) election will decide the future of Jammu and Kashmir, which has remained the target of foreign powers since Independence," he told the gathering.

"Not only this, dynastic politics made this beautiful region hollow from within. The political parties you trusted never cared for your children. They only cared for and projected their children and did not let new leadership grow," Modi added.

The prime minister said his government focused on carving out a young leadership in Jammu and Kashmir soon after "we came to power at the Centre in 2014".

Continuing his tirade against the Congress, NC and the PDP, he said these parties never wanted the youth to join politics but "we challenged their intentions and the result was that 30,000 to 35,000 youngsters got elected (in the local body elections) and took control of J-K". He said terrorism is taking its last breath in Jammu and Kashmir. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with 'Deepjyoti', a calf who was born at the Prime Minister's official residence, in New Delhi, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

The non-biological PM continues to make plans to travel in other parts of country and abroad, studiously avoiding a visit to Manipur
– Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secy

Focus on 'deteriorating' security situation in J&K instead of raising the bogey of dynastic politics
- Omar Abdullah, National Conference Vice President

3 terrorists killed in J&K's encounter

SRINAGAR, 14 SEPT

- The operation turned into an encounter after terrorists fired on a search party of the forces, who then retali-ated, according to a police official

Three terrorists were killed on Saturday morning in an overnight encounter with securi-ty forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said.

They said a cordon-and-search operation was launched in Chak Tapper Kreeri in the north Kashmir district's Pattan area late Friday night.

The cordon was maintained throughout the night and three terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire in the morning, he said.

The identity and group affiliation of the slain terrorists are being ascertained, he said, adding that the operation was underway.

The operation turned into an encounter after terrorists fired on a search party of the forces, who then retali-ated, according to a police official.

Meanwhile, security forces intensified their anti-terror operations in parts of Kishtwar, Udhampur, Poonch and Rajouri districts on Saturday, following recent encounters in which two soldiers led down their lives and two terrorists were killed, officials said.

A joint operation in the forests of Pingnal Dugadda in the Chhatroo belt of Kishtwar district entered the sec-ond day, with reinforcements joining the search parties to hunt down the terrorists responsible for killing two Army personnel, including a JCO, and injuring two others in a gunfight the previous day, they said.

There has been no fresh contact with the terrorists so far, they said. *—PTI*

Congress accuses Buch of investing in Chinese funds

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Upping the ante over the conflict of interest row involving SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, the Congress on Saturday claimed that she traded in listed securities while in possession of unpublished price sensitive information and has been investing in the Chinese firms at a time when India is facing geopolitical tensions with China.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh pointed to "fresh conflict of interest allegations" against Buch, claiming that she, as a whole-time member and later as the SEBI chairperson, traded in listed securities worth Rs 36.9 crore.

Congress attack comes a day after Buch said that she had made all necessary disclosures and complied with recusal guidelines in dealing with companies such as Mahindra Group that hired her husband, as she rejected allegations of impropriety as

PHOTO: PTI

"false, malicious and motivated".

Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch in a joint statement -- the second since US-based short seller Hindenburg Research charged her of not being motivated enough to act on allegations against the Adani group due to conflict of interest -- also addressed issues raised by the opposition Congress over receiving payments from her previous employer the ICICI Bank while being a whole time member of the SEBI.

This is in violation of Section 6 of the SEBI's Code on Conflict of Interest, he said. *—PTI*

People offer food, umbrellas to RG Kar medicos

KOLKATA, 14 SEPT

Forty-year-old Arpan Maity, a practising physician and an alumnus of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, was busy collecting food items, clothes, raincoats, umbrellas and other materials at a makeshift counter near the State health department headquarters where thousands of medics have been staging a sit-in for the last five days.

From cots, bed sheets and raincoats to large umbrellas and food packets, the agitators are flooded with items from common people, Maity told PTI at the agitation site.

"Till 2 pm on Saturday, 3,000 food packets have been served for free to people, not only to the protestors but also to local hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, autorickshaw drivers, journalists and other those who have come to the site to express solidarity with the movement," he said.

Dibyendu Banerjee, a junior doctor manning the 'Abhaya' Clinic, which has been set up to treat patients at the site, said that till now 350 people, including policemen, have been treated.

From people taking part in the protest to families of hawkers and other locals -- the clinic, named in the memory of the rape-murder victim of RG Kar Hospital -- has been packed with patients since the crack of dawn.

Instead of merely saying that whoever is found guilty would be punished, she should have been more categorical and direct. Considering the destruction of evidence at the crime scene, and the arrest of only one person, we were expecting the CM to be more forthright.
– RG Kar rape-murder victim's mother

The Junior Doctors' Forum is spearheading the movement demanding justice for the medic and the resignation of Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal and the health secretary. *—PTI*

Prohibitory orders around RG Kar extended till 30 Sept

Prohibitory orders around the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in north Kolkata were extended till 30 September, an officer said. The orders, which were first imposed on 18 August, restrict gatherings of more than five people in the designated area. The restrictions were imposed amid protests over the rape and murder of the doctor at the hospital. The prohibitory orders issued under Section 163 (2) of BNSS would also be in place at the Shyambazar five-point crossing, besides the roads leading to the RG Kar hospital, said a notification. "Carrying sticks, dangerous and lethal weapons are banned and any attempt to disturb peace and tranquillity will invite legal prosecution. *—PT*

3 HELD OVER CONSPIRACY TO ATTACK MEDICOS

KOLKATA, 14 SEPT

CPI(M) leader Kalatan Dasgupta was among two people who were arrested for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to attack the protesting junior doctors, police said on Saturday.

The arrests were made after an audio clip of a phone call was released by TMC leader Kunal Ghosh, who alleged that a conspiracy was being hatched to attack the protesting junior doctors outside the Swashtya Bhawan in Salt Lake to defame the Mamata Banerjee government in the state.

The other person arrested in the case was Sanjiv Das, police said.

Following the arrests, TMC's Ghosh claimed that the clip was "leaked" by those who were "plotting attacks on doctors". *—PTI*

FINAL 'LAAL SALAAM'

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi pays her last respects to deceased CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury; CPI (M) politburo members and others march during the last journey of Yechury from the party headquarters to the AIIMS hospital, in New Delhi, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Delhi cops file FIR over fireworks outside Kejri's home

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Delhi Police has filed an FIR over bursting of firecrackers outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence in north Delhi's Civil Lines to welcome him upon his release from jail, officials said on Saturday.

There is a ban on the production, sale and use of firecrackers in the national capital to control air pollution in the coming winter season. The ban was announced by the Kejriwal government on Monday.

A case under section 223 (disobedience to orders promulgated by public servant) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has been registered against unknown people at the Civil Lines Police station over fireworks outside the chief minister's official residence, an official said.

The FIR is registered on the complaint of a sub-inspector who was deployed at the 6 Flag Staff Road on Friday evening.

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to Kejriwal in a corruption case filed the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) in connection with the Delhi excise policy case.

Meanwhile, Arvind Kejriwal will address party workers at the new headquarters of the AAP on Sunday.

The AAP supremo had last addressed party workers on 2 June before surrendering at Tihar jail. He was earlier granted interim bail in May by the Supreme Court for campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls till 2 June. *—PTI*

PROTEST AFTER 2 KILLED

Cong denied entry to Assam eviction site

GUWAHATI, 14 SEPT

A Congress delegation was on Saturday allegedly prevented by local people from visiting the eviction site at Sonapur, on the outskirts of Guwahati where two people were killed in police firing two days ago.

Several MLAs and leaders of the opposition party had gone to Kochutoli village to meet the locals, but a group of people stopped their vehicles before reaching the site.

They disembarked from the cars and tried to walk to the site, but a section of local people did not allow that too, a Congress leader said.

Congress' state working president and MLA Jakir Hussain Sikdar tried to reason with the locals and said the delegation came to listen to all sides.

Several MLAs and leaders of the Opposition party had gone to Kochutoli village to meet the locals at eviction site in Guwahati *PHOTO: ANI*

"As people's representatives, we will raise all genuine concerns of the people. Congress will participate in movements for genuine demands. But at the same time, police shooting people dead and evicting people without notice cannot be tolerated. Those who attacked the police must also face action," he said, speaking to reporters at the site.

"We want a peaceful Assam. There is no law and order in the state anymore," Hussain asserted.

A drive in Kochutoli village to evict Bengali-speaking Muslim villagers had turned violent on Thursday when a section of encroachers allegedly attacked the officials carrying out the exercise with sharp weapons and stones. *—PTI*

'Unfortunate' to refer to Gyanvapi as mosque: UP CM

GORAKHPUR, 14 SEPT

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said it is "unfortunate" to refer to Gyanvapi as a mosque and called Gyanvapi an "embodiment of Vishwanath himself".

Adityanath made these remarks while inaugurating an international seminar on "Contribution of Nath Panth in Building a Harmonious Society" at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, where he also highlighted the spiritual significance of Kashi and the revered site of Gyanvapi.

"It is unfortunate that some people refer to Gyanvapi as a mosque while it is the embodiment of Lord Vishwanath himself," he said, and also made a detailed reference to legendary sage Adi Shankar, narrating an anecdote about his "encounter" with Lord Vishwanath in Kashi.

Gyanvapi issue has been at the centre of a long-drawn legal battle with the Hindu side arguing that the Gyanvapi mosque was allegedly built on the remains of a pre-existing temple, while the Muslim side has contested the claim.

Samajwadi Party (SP) targeted the chief minister over his remark even as the BJP and some saints of Ayodhya rallied around in his support.

"We have been continuously saying that it is a temple, only the foolish people call it a mosque." *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Veteran journalist Vijay Vaidya dies at 82

MUMBAI, 14 SEPT

Veteran journalist Vijay Vaidya passed away at his residence in Mumbai on Saturday morning due to old age, his family members said. He was 82. Vaidya is survived by his wife, two sons and other family members. He worked in Marathi dailies, including 'Sakal' and 'Navakal' in Mumbai. Senior journalist Yogesh Trivedi said, "Vaidya had expressed a wish that after his death, his mortal remains should be wrapped with newspapers of the day and taken for cremation with joy and not sadness." —*PTI*

2 women lynched over suspicion of witchcraft in WB

SURI, 14 SEPT

Two middle-aged women were beaten to death by neighbours on suspicion of practising witchcraft in West Bengal's Birbhum district, police said on Saturday. Bodies of the two tribal women were found in an irrigation canal near Harisarah village under Mayureswar police station. Police arrested 15 people in connection with the incident that took place on Friday night. The family members of the deceased, Lodgi Kisku and Dolly Soren, alleged that they were called out of their homes at night by a group of people who beat them with sticks after tying them with ropes. Rani Kisku, a daughter of Lodki Kisku, said, "My cousin and other villagers dragged my mother out of home. My two brothers were away, we couldn't protect her." A senior police officer said that prima facie, suspicion of practising witchcraft is the motive.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Juice vendor held for mixing urine in customers' drinks

GHAZIABAD, 14 SEPT

A juice vendor was on Friday arrested and his 15-year-old boy detained over allegedly serving fruit juices mixed with urine to customers, police said. According to a police officer, the arrest was made following complaints by the public that the juice seller has been serving fruit juice to the customers after mixing human urine in it. ACP Ankur Vihar Bhaskar Verma on Friday said the accused has been identified as Aamir. Police said they interrogated the owner about a container filled with urine but he could not give any satisfactory reply. A juvenile was detained, adding action is being taken in the matter.—*PTI*

6 held for stripping boy, making him dance naked in Kota

KOTA, 14 SEPT

A 12-year-old Dalit boy was allegedly stripped naked, forced to dance and filmed after he was caught stealing wire from an event here, police said on Saturday. A purported video showing the boy dancing to a song with four to five men sitting around surfaced online. In the video, the men were compelling the boy to dance with a smile. The matter came to light after police found the video and located the victim. Based on the complaint by the victim's father, his son had attended a comedy event on Friday night, organised at a fair in GAD Circle. Six accused arrested were Kshitij Gurjar, 24, Ashish Upadhyay, 52, his son Yayati Upadhyay, 24, Gourav Soni, 21, Sandeep Singh, 30, and Sumit Kumar Sain, 25, they added. —*PTI*

More protests, bandh in HP over 'illegal' mosques

Protesters chanted Chalisa during bandh called by VHP

SHIMLA/HAMIRPUR 14 SEPT

Shops remained closed in several towns across Himachal Pradesh on Saturday as a two-hour bandh was observed in protest against unauthorised construction of mosques in the state and the recent police action on demonstrators.

The bandh call till 11am given by the VHP and various business groups saw protest marches by some Hindu organisations at Bilaspur, Kullu, Chamba, Hamirpur, Poanta Sahib and other places. There was not much impact in Shimla as the Beopar Mandal had already observed a bandh on Thursday.

The protesters also recited Hanuman chalisa during the bandh period in Hamirpur and Chamba towns and raised slogans. The protest was against unauthorised construction of a portion of a mosque in Shimla and encroachment on government land by a mosque in Mandi besides baton charge on protestors of Hindu groups in Shimla on Wednesday and use of water cannon on demonstrators in Mandi on Friday.

People protest against the alleged illegal construction at a mosque, in Shimla, on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

The protesters are also demanding verification of outsiders living in the state.

"The Manali Beopar Mandal kept the shops closed for two hours," said Rajneesh, general secretary Manali Beopar Mandal Rajneesh. Shops also remained closed in Dalhousie. Proper verification of outsiders should be done and encroachments should be dealt strictly, said a shopkeeper of Dalhousie. Ten people including four police personnel were injured in the clash between the police and the protestors in Sanjauli area of Shimla town on Wednesday and FIRs have been registered against 50 people by the police.

On Friday, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had appealed to maintain peace and brotherhood. —*PTI*

Centre delays HC judges' appointment over sensitive data

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that "sensitive material" with the government is delaying the implementation of the SC Collegium's recommendations for appointments of chief justices to high courts.

Attorney General R Venkatramani told a bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that he has received certain inputs from the Union government which are sensitive in nature.

He also told the top court that revealing these issues in the public domain would not in be in the interest of the institution. "I would like to place the inputs and my suggestions in a sealed cover for perusal by the judges," Venkatramani told the bench.

The matter has now been posted for hearing on 20 September.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Harsh Vibhore Singhal seeking a direction that a time limit be fixed for the Centre to notify the appointment of judges. It has also sought a direction to plug the 'zone of twilight' of there being no time for notifying the collegium's recommendations for the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary.

The plea said that in the absence of a fixed time period, "the government arbitrarily delays notifying appointments thereby trampling upon judicial independence, imperilling the constitutional and democratic order and disparaging the majesty and sagacity of the court". The plea said if any name is not objected to or the appointments are not notified by the end of such fixed time period, then appointments of such judges must be taken as notified. —*PTI*

15 DEAD

Surveillance system set up in Gujarat to fight undiagnosed fever

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

In the wake of an undiagnosed fever claiming 15 lives in Gujarat's Kutch, the Union health ministry has set up a surveillance mechanism to immediately respond to such outbreaks, official sources said on Saturday.

They said points of entry such as airports, land ports and seaports are also being monitored for the disease.

The government has established an effective surveillance mechanism through the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), IHIP network and also through the One Health Mission to immediately respond to any such outbreaks, according to the sources.

The ICMR's network of laboratories will take care of diagnostics and there is enough capability to step up the supply of diagnostic kits if required, they said.

Under the PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), the government has strengthened tertiary care across the country through AIIMS institutes, apart from bolstering emergency services through critical care blocks. The Gujarat government has deployed specialist doctors and 50 medical teams in and around seven villages of two talukas in Kutch district after the outbreak of the undiagnosed fever. Samples of the infected patients have been sent to the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC) in Gandhinagar and at the National Institute of Virology in Pune to identify the exact cause of the fever and the subsequent deaths. —*PTI*

2 years of Project Cheetah: India awaits Kenya's approval for new batch

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The MoU process to bring a new batch of cheetahs from Kenya is in progress, with India having finalised its part and awaiting approval from the African country, a senior official has said.

Cheetahs for the breeding centre being built in Gujarat's Bunni grasslands will also be brought from Kenya, SP Yadav, the director general of the International Big Cat Alliance, told PTI editors during a recent interaction here.

As part of the first-ever intercontinental translocation of the big cats, 20 cheetahs have been brought to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh so far -- eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

Since they arrived in India, eight adult cheetahs -- three females and five males -- have died.

Seventeen cubs have been born in India, with 12 surviving, bringing the total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno to 24. Currently, all are in enclosures. The grand initiative completes two years on September 17.

Twenty cheetahs have been brought to Madhya Pradesh so far PHOTO: PTI

The 'Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India' talks about bringing around 12-14 cheetahs each year from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries for five years to establish a founder stock.

"Discussions are ongoing with South Africa. It has already identified 12 to 16 surplus cheetahs. They must either give them to another country or euthanise them. That is the current situation," Yadav added.

In South Africa, animals are kept in sanctuaries based on their carrying capacities. If the population exceeds this capacity, they either export the animals or euthanise them, as they cannot sustain an overpopulation, he explained. —*PTI*

NAXALITE KILLED IN CHHATTISGARH ENCOUNTER

RAIPUR, 14 SEPT

A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security forces in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Saturday, police said.

The encounter took place early in the morning in the jungles on a hill near Tumalpad village under Chintagufa police station limits when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Bastar Fighters - both units of the state police and district force - were involved in the operation, he said. After the exchange of fire stopped, the body of a Naxalite was recovered along with a weapon and a huge cache of Maoist-related material from the spot, he said.

With this incident, a total of 154 Naxalites have been gunned down. —*PTI*

ICMR ties up with Indian Immunologicals Limited to develop vaccines against Zika virus

Hyderabad, 14 SEPT

Vaccine manufacturer Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) signed a Memorandum of Association (MoA) with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for the clinical development of the Zika vaccine. As per the MoA, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will fund the Phase I clinical trial costs, including the costs relating to the conduct, investigations, and monitoring of the clinical trial. The trial will be conducted at the ICMR network sites in India.Speaking on the occasion, Dr K Anand Kumar, Managing Director, Indian Immunologicals Limited, said, "It is a great moment for IIL to collaborate with ICMR to develop Zika vaccine." —*PTI*

STONES PELTED AT VANDE BHARAT 2 DAYS BEFORE FLAGGING OFF

MAHASAMUND, 14 SEPT

Five people were arrested for allegedly pelting stones at the Durg-Visakhapatnam Vande Bharat Express during a trial run in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district, officials said on Saturday.

The incident occurred when the train was passing through Bagbahra railway station on its way back from Visakhapatnam to Durg during its trail run around 9pm on Friday, said Praveen Singh Dhakad, inspector of the Railway Protection Force (Mahasamund).

PHOTO: PTI

The train is to be flagged off from Durg on 16 September for a regular run.

The express train started from Durg, and passing through Raipur, it reached Mahasamund, from where it left at 7.10am for the further journey, he said.

The official said that on the way back, some anti-social elements hurled stones at the train near Bagbahra, damaging window panes of three coaches, C2, C4 and C9. —*PTI*

'GYM OWNER KILLED AS HE STOOD UP TO BISHNOI'

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The gym owner who was shot dead in South Delhi's upscale Greater Kailash area on Thursday had stood up to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang because he had asked his business partner not to pay Rs 5 crore that the outfit had tried to extort from him, according to sources.

Four people have been arrested in this connection, they said.

"These four are suspected to have provided logistical support to the shooters. They are being further interrogated by a Special Cell team," a senior officer said. The deceased Nadir Shah -- who previously had criminal cases, including extortion, robbery and attempted murder, against him -- co-owned a gym in Greater Kailash 1. The officer said two more people were detained and questioned in connection with the case but the main shooter remained on the run. —*PTI*

No competition between Hindi, other languages: HM

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

There can never be a competition between Hindi and other Indian languages because official language Hindi is their friend and they complement each other, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Addressing the fourth Akhil Bhartiya Rajbhasha Sammelan on the occasion of Hindi Diwas, Shah also said the promotion of the official language Hindi cannot happen until all other Indian languages are strengthened and the official language does not establish a dialogue with all of them.

"There can never be a competition between Hindi and local languages because Hindi is the friend of all local languages. Hindi and all local languages complement each other. Therefore, the relationship will be strengthened," he said.

He said the Hindi Diwas is an occasion to take a pledge to make Hindi a communication language, a common language, a technical language and now an international language.

PHOTO: PTI

- He said the Hindi Diwas is to take a pledge to make Hindi a communication language

"We are celebrating Diamond Jubilee to mark the completion of 75 years of Hindi as the official language. By accepting Hindi as the official language and connecting all the local languages of the country through Hindi, we are moving towards preserving and promoting our culture, languages, literature, art and grammar," he said. —*PTI*

RAIN HAVOC

Heavy rain leads to leakage from Taj Mahal's main dome

AGRA, 14 SEPT

The main dome of the Taj Mahal here witnessed water leakage due to incessant rain for the past three days which inundated a garden on the premises.

The purported video of the submerged garden on the Taj Mahal premises went viral on Thursday and caught the tourists' attention.

However, a senior official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra circle, said there is leakage in the main dome due to seepage and there is no damage to it.

The video of the submerged garden on Taj Mahal premises went viral and caught the tourists' attention PHOTO: X

Rajkumar Patel, Superintending Chief of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra circle, told PTI, "Yes, we have witnessed the leakage in the main dome of the Taj Mahal. After that when we checked it was due to seepage —*PTI*

2 dead after driving SUV into flooded underpass in Faridabad

FARIDABAD, 14 SEPT

Two private bank employees have died after getting trapped in their sports utility vehicle in the flooded Old Faridabad Railway underpass here, police said on Saturday.

It happened late Friday night when the victims, Punyashray Sharma, 48 and Viraj, 26, were returning home in Greater Faridabad from Gurugram, they said. According to police, due to the rainfall throughout Friday, the underpass was inundated and as a precaution, cars were being warned against entering it.

They said that around 11:50pm, an XUV 700 entered the underpass, ignoring all warnings and got stuck in the deep floodwater, following which water gushed into the vehicle. Bodies have been handed over to the relatives. —*PTI*

The SUV parked at the NIT police station after an accident in which a manager and a cashier of a private bank died on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

RAGING FIRE

A wildfire consumes a rural area during the dry season in Varzea Paulista, Sao Paulo state, Brazil. According to national disaster monitoring agency Cemaden, a drought that began last year has become the worst on record in Brazil
PHOTO: PTI

WHY PEACE CONTINUES TO EVADE MANIPUR

More than a year after deadly ethnic violence broke out between the majority Meitei community and the minority Kuki in Manipur, tensions continue to rage.

Peace has remained elusive and — according to many in the state — so has a concrete action from the government.

The latest flare-up of violence occurred on 1 September, after months of relative calm.

According to authorities, several people have been killed in drone and rocket attacks.

The use of such aerial weapons is a first for the restive state and the government called it a "significant escalation" of violence.

The police in Manipur claim that Kuki groups carried out the drone attacks on Meitei-dominated areas. Kuki organisations, however, refute the allegations, saying that it was the Meiteis who used drones.

Last year was the first time that the Meitei, who are predominantly Hindu, live mostly in and around the state's capital city Imphal, and the Kuki — who are mainly Christian and inhabit the surrounding hills — clashed against each other.

It came on the heels of a demand by the Meitei community to be officially accorded tribal status, which the Kukis protested. The conflict has since claimed the lives of 225 people, according to official data. More than 60,000 people remain displaced. Activists have questioned the response of the authorities to quell the violence. Many have pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is yet to visit the state or make a comprehensive statement.

Several people have been killed in drone and rocket attacks in Manipur ***PHOTO: ANI***

What's behind the ethnic tensions?

Tellang Letminlen Haokip, a Kuki student leader from Churachandpur, said his community has been discriminated against for decades and that the ethnic tensions run deep.

"We have been economically and politically exploited. There is a huge mistrust between those living in the hills and those in the valley. There is hardly any development work in the hills. All good infrastructure is in the valley and we are denied sources of development and opportunities," he said.

40-year-old Surjit, from the Meitei ethnic group, described the ethnic divisions as "a ticking time bomb that has exploded."

He noted that the Meiteis have been deprived of buying land in the hills, and that illegal migration of Kukis from Myanmar over the years has added to the strife.

Conflict is not new to Manipur, which became part of India in 1949. For decades, the state has been battered by cycles of violence between different ethnic communities warring against each other and a separatist insurgency.

Experts say that successive governments have failed to address the root cause of the conflict in the state, which has historically been neglected by those who rule the power corridors in New Delhi.

Nepram said that the lack of "political maturity" of those who are ruling over Manipur since the past 70 years shows a collective failure of successive governments.

"Once Manipur joined India, there should have been good policies in place to ensure coexistence. But rather there has been a militarization of that area. Rather than political dialogue there's a complete racialization of what's happening in Manipur. There has not even been a basic understanding of Manipur's history which has resulted in decades of wrong policies by policy-makers," she said.

No road to peace

Rights groups say there is a lack of a serious peace effort in Manipur.

"We have not seen anything happening concretely when it comes to a peace effort, except the formal calls for the armed groups to come to the negotiating table, which is a very routine thing," the Manipuri activist said. Nepram said it is "shocking" that there have been no peace talks. "The government should have brought the communities together and ensured that there are confidence-building measures. We don't need drones, we need dialogues." she said.

—DW India

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

The first private spacewalk isn't just a vanity project

Two astronauts have carried out the first-ever commercial spacewalk, using new less-bulky spacesuits designed by SpaceX.

Tech billionaire Jared Isaacman (who also funded the mission) and SpaceX engineer Sarah Gillis together spent almost half an hour outside their spacecraft at an altitude of some 700km, further from Earth than any human since the Apollo Moon landings. The brief jaunt into the void is a significant milestone for commercial spaceflight, with the spacecraft, suits and the overall mission all being SpaceX productions.

What's so interesting about the mission?

The Polaris Dawn mission stands out for several reasons. In terms of science and technology, the highlight is the test of new spacesuits for extravehicular activity (or EVA). A spacesuit that allows an astronaut to leave their vessel is a small spacecraft in its own right, and interest in new, modern suits is growing as NASA's planned Artemis missions to the Moon approach.

The mission is travelling around Earth in a highly elliptical orbit, which means its altitude ranges from 192km way out to 1,400km. The orbit is taking astronauts through regions of high radiation, including the South Atlantic Anomaly, and may allow for testing of the new suits under these extreme conditions.

Polaris Dawn also carries 36 different experiments, many studying the effects of spaceflight on the human body.

Polaris Dawn is the first of three missions Isaacman plans with SpaceX, which he says will "serve the bigger purpose of opening up space for everyone and making humankind a multiplanetary species". The second may aim to boost the Hubble Space Telescope's orbit and prolong its life, while the third may use SpaceX's reusable Starship rocket (which is currently in the early stages of testing).

Commercial spaceflight on the way up

Perhaps the most significant thing about Polaris Dawn is what it suggests about the future of spaceflight. This is a commercial mission, operated by SpaceX using its own technology without the involvement of government space agencies.

It is not the "space tourism" we have seen from the likes of Blue Origin, sending rich people on sub-orbital joyrides. While the SpaceX mission is funded via private wealth, it is making a genuine contribution to scientific knowledge – and to the future of spaceflight.

One crucial feature of government space programmes has been the rigorous training and selection process for astronauts, ensuring those who make it to space know exactly what they are doing. SpaceX is continuing this high level of professionalism, with four extremely well-qualified and prepared astronauts participating in Polaris Dawn.

The Polaris Dawn spacewalk comes as two NASA astronauts are stranded on the International Space Station due to problems with the Starliner space vehicle, which Boeing built for the US space agency at great expense. It is now expected the pair will be rescued next February by a SpaceX vehicle (developed for far less money than Boeing's).

For all humankind?

The rise of non-government space flight has its critics, who say commercial imperatives and private control have no place in what should be a purely scientific endeavour. SpaceX (with its controversial owner Elon Musk) has also faced criticisms over environmental concerns and treatment of staff.

However, the huge improvements in space technology and reductions in cost that have occurred in recent years are largely due to commercial involvement. When humanity returns to the Moon – and if we one day travel to Mars and beyond – private companies will play an essential role.

And while Polaris Dawn is clearly a passion project for Isaacman, it's not a vanity project. It will have real benefits in terms of science and technology – and that's good news for all future human endeavours, in space and here on Earth.

—The Conversation

Billionaire Jared Isaacman was among the four who took the spacewalk ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

Despite calls for Netanyahu's resignation, he chooses war over peace

As protests grow, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu clings to power in what appears to be a gambit to shape his own political and legal future, regardless of the cost.

War-weary and angry, hundreds of thousands of Israelis are taking to the streets week after week, calling for Netanyahu to cut a deal and bring the remaining hostages from the 7 October Hamas attack home.

Their calls remain unanswered. These massive public demonstrations, including the largest nationwide strike in 18 months, are met with renewed conditions for any deal with Hamas and commitments to continuing the war into its second year. Despite the more than 7, 50,000 protesters calling for his resignation and an end to the war, clinging to power and continuing the fight against Hamas appears to be Netanyahu's only plan for the future.

What started the protests?

The protests began after another six Israeli hostages were found dead in Gaza at the beginning of September.

A key demand of the protesters has been for Netanyahu to sign a ceasefire with Hamas that would see the release of the remaining Israelis still held captive since the 7 October, 2023 attacks.

Despite increasing public dissent, Netanyahu has refused to sign any ceasefire and continues to add new conditions to any potential deal.

The latest sticking point is Israel's insistence that it retain a permanent military presence in the Philadelphi Corridor – a strip of land on the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Hamas refuses to accept any such stipulation, arguing that all Israeli troops should evacuate the Gaza Strip.

Egypt has also expressed its concern at the prospect of Israeli troops stationed on its border, amid concerns of miscalculation from either Egyptian or Israeli troops.

Adding to the public pressure on Netanyahu is the political pressure from both inside and outside of his ruling coalition.

Externally, his political rivals accuse Netanyahu of lying to the Israeli public and for putting his political survival ahead of any deal to bring the hostages home.

Inside his coalition, there is more pressure to continue the war until all vestiges of Hamas are destroyed and the Palestinians are pacified.

While commentators speculate on how long Netanyahu can survive, perhaps the more relevant question is how he got here in the first place.

Despite public dissent, Netanyahu has refused to sign any ceasefire ***PHOTO: PTI***

Netanyahu's narrow window

The root cause of Netanyahu's current dilemma is a series of 2016 allegations of corruption. Subsequent police investigations led to Netanyahu being charged in 2019 with breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud.

Since the allegations became public, Netanyahu has tried various political manoeuvres to avoid fronting court and a potential guilty verdict and likely jail sentence.

Initially, these involved using parliamentary procedures to impede the judicial process. When these efforts failed, Netanyahu's trial began in May 2020. Then, in March 2021, Netanyahu lost the election and the prime ministership, leaving him without any institutional protection – something he covets.

After another inconclusive election in November 2022 Netanyahu made a Faustian bargain with several right-wing nationalist parties to regain the prime ministership. In return for entering his coalition, Netanyahu agreed to pursue the nationalists' political agenda.

Political bargain offers no way out

Because Israel has just one parliamentary house, the Supreme Court acts as a check and balance on the Knesset's power. The government's intention to ensure it always had a majority on the committee that appoints judges was of particular concern to many Israelis.Opponents feared these reforms could give Netanyahu the power to appoint sympathetic judges to the Supreme Court and potentially gain immunity from prosecution.

For the nationalists, the proposed reforms would remove many of the institutional checks and balances imposed by the Supreme Court on the expansion of Israeli settlements and the appropriation of Palestinian land in the West Bank – something Israeli nationalists have wanted for years. If successful, it would mean Israel's 57-year occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem would become permanent, sounding the death knell for any future Palestinian state, something that did not go unnoticed by Hamas.

The proposed reforms provoked unprecedented public backlash, with massive weekly protests racking Israel from January to October 2023.

Clinging to power

Consequently, Netanyahu is determined to do whatever is necessary to remain in power.

This means acceding to the nationalists' demands by advocating for negotiation positions he knows Hamas will reject. Despite mounting political pressure, the government's dogmatic approach to negotiations gives the nationalists time to pursue their ideological objectives by altering irrevocably the face of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Since the Hamas attacks, there has been an explosion of Israeli settler outposts throughout the West Bank appropriating Palestinian land. While Israel claims it is combating terrorism, the ultimate purpose of these actions, alongside Israel's actions in Gaza, appears to be to crush any organised Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and its appropriation of Palestinian land.

If successful, the nationalists' dream of a wholly Jewish state from the river to the sea would be closer than ever.

—PTI/360INFO

PHOTO: X/@TRTWORLDNOW

5 dead in Romania as rainstorms leave scores stranded

BUCHAREST, 14 SEPT

Five people in eastern Romania have been found dead after torrential rainstorms left scores of people stranded in flooded areas, emergency authorities said on Saturday. Rescue services scrambled to save 95 people in the hard-hit eastern counties of Galati and Vaslui. The bodies were found in the localities of Pechea, Draguseni, Costache Negri, and Corod, the Department for Emergency Situations said without providing details on how they died. Emergency authorities released video footage that showed a team of rescuers evacuating an elderly man on a small lifeboat before carrying him to safety. A Black Hawk helicopter was deployed to Galati to help with the search and rescue missions. ***—AP***

Zimbabwe to cull 200 elephants amid food shortages

ZIMBABWE, 14 SEPT

Zimbabwe will cull 200 elephants as it faces an unprecedented drought that has led to food shortages. The 200 elephants would be hunted in areas where they had clashed with humans, including Hwange, home of Zimbabwe's largest natural reserve, said the director general of ZimParks, Fulton Mangwanya. Zimbabwe's environment minister, Sithembiso Nyoni, told Voice of America: "We are having a discussion with ZimParks and some communities to do like what Namibia has done, so that we can cull the elephants and mobilise the women to maybe dry the meat, package it, and ensure that it gets to some communities that need the protein." Zimbabwe is home to an estimated 100,000 elephants – the second-biggest population in the world after Botswana. Due to conservation efforts, Hwange is home to 65,000 of the animals, more than four times its capacity, according to ZimParks. ***—Courtesy, The Guardian***

China's economy softens in August, reveals NBS report

BEIJING, 14 SEPT

China's economy softened in August, extending a slowdown in industrial activity and real estate prices as Beijing faces pressure to ramp up spending to stimulate demand. Data published by the National Bureau of Statistics Saturday showed weakening activity across industrial production, retail sales and real estate this month compared to July. "We should be aware that the adverse impacts arising from the changes in the external environment are increasing," said Liu Aihua, the bureau's chief economist in a news conference.***—AP***

Pakistan man gets death sentence for insulting Prophet

LAHORE, 14 SEPT

A Pakistan court awarded a death sentence to a man from the Punjab province for insulting the Prophet Muhammad on social media, a court official said on Saturday. Blasphemy, especially insult to the Prophet, is an offense punishable by death in Pakistan. "Additional Sessions Court Judge Shahbaz Iqbal Tarar of Sarai Alamgir on Friday handed down the death sentence to Irfan (who goes by a single name) on the charges of insulting the Prophet," the court official told PTI. He said the court convicted the suspect and also imposed a fine of PKR 1,00,000 on him. Irfan, a resident of Sarai Alamgir, some 200 km from Lahore, was arrested this year for allegedly committing blasphemy by making insulting remarks against the Prophet. ***—PTI***

Biden and Starmer discuss war in Ukraine

The US President dismissed Russian threats and said Putin will not prevail in this war

WASHINGTON, 14 SEPT

UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer did not signal any decision on allowing Ukraine to use long-range missiles to hit targets inside Russia after talks with US President Joe Biden in Washington.

President Biden brushed off a threat from Russian leader Vladimir Putin about war against the West if Ukraine's allies allow it to use weapons deeper inside Russia.

It's a shift that Kyiv has pleaded for but does not appear likely to be announced following a meeting Friday between Biden and Britain's prime minister. Ukraine and many of its supporters in the US and Europe want Biden to lift restrictions on Western-provided long-range weapons, and there are signs Biden might shift the administration's policy.

But the US, concerned about any step that could lead Russia to escalate the conflict, has moved cautiously before granting a series of earlier requests from Ukraine for specific arms, including advanced tanks, missiles and rocket systems, and F-16 fighter jets. Russian officials have issued similar threats before many of those past decisions.

Ukraine was a key topic for Biden and Starmer following this week's visit to Kyiv by their top diplomats, who came under fresh pressure to loosen weapons restrictions. So far, the US has allowed Ukraine to use American-provided weapons only in a limited area inside Russia's border with Ukraine.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to share the status of private conversations, said they believed Biden would be amenable. No announcement was expected Friday, several US officials said. Speaking to journalists shortly before the talks with Starmer, Biden said he wanted to make "clear that Putin will not prevail in this war." Asked what he thought about Putin's threat, Biden answered, "I don't think much about Putin."

Sitting at a table across from Biden before their closed-door meeting, Starmer said, "I think the next few weeks and months could be crucial" for the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pressing the US and other allies to allow his forces to use Western weapons to target Russian air bases and launch sites far from the border as Russia has stepped up assaults on Ukraine's electricity grid and utilities before winter. ***—AP***

US President Joe Biden with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer during meeting with in the Blue Room at the White House on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Sunita, Butch to vote in 2024 US poll from space

Stranded on the International Space Station (ISS) through February, NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore plan to vote in the upcoming Presidential election from space. "It's a very important duty that we have as citizens and (I am) looking forward to being able to vote from space, which is pretty cool," Williams, who is of Indian origin, said on a call with reporters on Friday afternoon. Williams, 58, and Wilmore, 61, participated in a press conference on Friday from the ISS, which has been their home since June. Their Boeing Starliner spacecraft ran into several problems midflight and could not bring them home from a planned 8-day voyage. "I sent down my request for a ballot today," Wilmore said. ***—PTI***

Trump calls Laura Loomer a 'free spirit'

WASHINGTON, 14 SEPT

Donald Trump has defended his ties with Laura Loomer, who has drawn fire from some of his Republican allies for embracing conspiracy theories and making racist comments, including against Kamala Harris.

"Laura has been a supporter of mine. Just like a lot of people are supporters, and she's been a supporter of mine. She speaks very positively of the campaign," Trump, the former president, said on Friday at a news conference in Southern California.

He was responding to a question from a reporter about his allies expressing concern about his close relationship with Loomer in recent days. "I don't control Laura. Laura — she's a free spirit. Well, I don't know. I mean, look, I can't tell Laura what to do. She is a strong person, she's got strong opinions, and I don't know what she said, but that's not up to me," Trump said.

Loomer, often seen as a right-wing conspiracy theorist, in another post on Sunday, said the "White House will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call centre" if Harris wins the 5 November Presidential election. ***—PTI***

US schools, offices shut after Trump spreads rumours

SPRINGFIELD, 14 SEPT

Bomb threats prompted the evacuation of schools and government buildings for a second day on Friday in an Ohio community that has been the focus of unwanted attention after former president Donald Trump amplified false rumours that Haitian immigrants are abducting and eating pets.

An emailed threat said bombs had been planted in the homes of Springfield's mayor and other city officials, said Karen Graves, a city spokesperson. A second email said that bombs would be detonated at locations including Springfield City Hall, a high school, a middle school, two elementary schools, a local office of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and a licensing bureau. The buildings were evacuated, and authorities with explosive-detection dogs swept and cleared them. ***—AP***

Pope slams Kamala and Trump on 'anti-life' stance

NEW YORK, 13 SEPT

Pope Francis on Friday slammed both US Presidential candidates for what he called anti-life policies on abortion and migration, and he advised American Catholics to choose who they think is the "lesser evil" in the upcoming US elections.

"Both are against life, be it the one who kicks out migrants, or be it the one who kills babies," Francis said. The Argentine Jesuit was asked to provide counsel to American Catholic voters during an airborne news conference while he flew back to Rome from his four-nation tour through Asia. Francis stressed that he is not an American and would not be voting.

Neither Republican candidate Donald Trump nor the Democratic candidate, Kamala Harris, was mentioned by name. But Francis nevertheless expressed himself in stark terms when asked to weigh in on their positions on two hot-button issues in the US election — abortion and migration — that are also of major concern to the Catholic Church. Francis said migration is a right described in Scripture and that anyone who does not follow the Biblical call to welcome the stranger is committing a "grave sin". ***—AP***

Pope Francis ***PHOTO: PTI***

Iran sends satellite into space

TEHRAN, 14 SEPT

Iran launched a satellite into space Saturday with a rocket built by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, state-run media reported, the latest for a programme the West fears helps Tehran advance its ballistic missile programme.

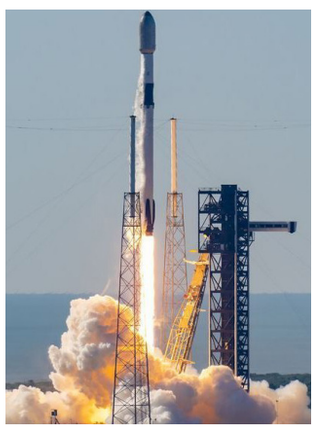
Iran described the launch as a success, which would be the second such launch to put a satellite into orbit with the rocket. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the launch's success, nor did Iranian authorities immediately provide footage or other details.

The launch comes amid heightened tensions gripping the wider West Asia over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, during which Tehran launched an unprecedented direct missile-and-drone attack on Israel.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to enrich uranium to nearly weapons-grade levels, raising concerns among nonproliferation experts about Tehran's program. Iran identified the satellite-carrying rocket as the Qaem-100, which the Guard used in January for another successful launch. Qaem means "upright" in Iran's Farsi language. The solid-fuel rocket put the Chamran-1 satellite, weighing 60 kilograms, into a 550-kilometre orbit, state media reported.

The US State Department and the American military did not immediately respond to requests for comment over the Iranian launch.

The United States had previously said Iran's satellite launches defy a UN Security Council resolution and called on Tehran to undertake no activity involving ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. UN sanctions related to Iran's ballistic missile programme expired last October. ***—AP***



This would be the second such mission from Iran to put a satellite into orbit ***PHOTO:X/@EnglishFars***

Relatives of hostages held in Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group block a road during a protest demanding their release, in Israel ***PHOTO: PTI***

Israeli attack on Gaza kills 11, including 4 kids

DEIR AL-BALAH, 14 SEPT

Israeli airstrikes hit central and southern Gaza overnight into Saturday, killing at least 14 people as the friends and family members of a Turkish-American activist killed by an Israeli solider prepared to honour her in a funeral.

The airstrikes in Gaza City hit one home housing 11 people, including three women and four children, and another strike hit a tent in Khan Younis housing Palestinians displaced by the Israel-Hamas war, Gaza's Civil Defence said on Saturday.

They followed airstrikes earlier this week that hit a tent camp on Tuesday and a United Nations school housing displaced people on Wednesday. The second doses are expected to begin later this month as part of an effort for which the WHO said parties had already agreed to.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described the campaign as "a massive success amidst a tragic daily reality of life" in a post on X on Friday. Meanwhile, the body of Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, the Turkish-American activist killed September 6 by an Israeli soldier, was returned to her hometown late Friday accompanied by a police honour guard, the official Turkish news agency reported.

Draped in a Turkish flag, the coffin carrying her remains was carried from a hearse to a hospital in Didim by six officers in ceremonial uniform. Her funeral is due to be held in the coastal town in western Turkiye later Saturday.

The 26-year-old activist from Seattle, who held United States and Turkish citizenship, was killed after a demonstration against Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, according to an Israeli protester who witnessed the shooting. ***—AP***

RUSSIA & UKRAINE ANNOUNCE SWAP OF 206 PRISONERS

KIYV, 14 SEPT

Russia and Ukraine have exchanged prisoners of war, with each side releasing 103 people, the Interfax news agency cited Russia's defence ministry as saying on Saturday.

The ministry said the Russian soldiers exchanged on Saturday had been taken prisoner in Russia's Kursk region. Ukrainian forces captured territory there last month in their first major incursion into Russia.

Ukraine has made a new call on the West to allow it to strike deeper into Russia after a meeting between US and British leaders a day earlier produced no visible shift in their policy on the use of long-range weapons. "Russian terror begins at weapons depots, airfields and military bases inside the Russian Federation," Ukrainian presidential adviser Andriy Yermak said Saturday.

US historian and author Timothy Snyder on Saturday led a charity run in Kyiv to raise awareness of the conditions under which Ukrainian prisoners of war are held in Russia as the conflict approaches a third winter. The race came after a recent escalation in Russian missile and drone attacks, largely aimed at Ukraine's electricity infrastructure.

Russian forces shelled 15 border areas of Ukraine's Sumy region a total of 84 times on Friday, killing two people and wounding nine, the regional authority said. The authority, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said two people had died near the town of Yampil, Reuters reported. Courtesy, The Guardian

POLITICAL TURMOIL

Pak to roll out judicial reforms in Parl soon

ISLAMABAD, 14 SEPT

The Pakistan government is preparing to roll out a comprehensive judicial reforms package in Parliament amid speculation about legislation to extend the retirement age of superior court judges, according to a media report on Saturday.

With at least 22 amendments on the docket, these changes are set to overhaul the justice system and revamp the process of appointing the chief justice of the Supreme Court, The Express Tribune newspaper reported, quoting sources.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government has plans to introduce these reforms as early as Sunday, according to the report.

The proposal's centrepiece is introducing a new appointment process for the chief justice. Under the proposed changes, the parliamentary committee and judicial commission could be merged. By giving this decision-making power to the prime minister, the government hopes to curb internal politicking within the judiciary. ***—PTI***

PHOTO: PTI

PAK EX-PM KHAN BOOKED IN ANOTHER CASE

ISLAMABAD, 14 SEPT

Pakistan's top investigating agency has registered a case against jailed former prime minister Imran Khan for allegedly inciting government officials to mutiny through his social media posts, according to a media report.

A Federal Investigation Agency team visited the Adiala Jail to question Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, in connection with a controversial post on his official X account. ***—PTI***

Pak sacks special envoy to Afghanistan

The Pakistan government has removed its special representative to Afghanistan Asif Durrani on 10 September, amid heightened tensions between Islamabad and Kabul, media reports said on Saturday. No official reason was given for the move. The report said Durrani, who was appointed to the post in May 2023, failed to make an impact on the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship. ***—PTI***

Iraqi, US forces kill IS commander, other militants

BAGHDAD, 14 SEPT

Iraqi forces and American troops have killed a senior commander with the Islamic State group who was wanted by the United States, as well as several other prominent militants, Iraq's military said on Friday. The operation in Iraq's western Anbar province began in late August, the Iraqi military said, and involved also members of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service and Iraq's air force. Among the dead was an IS commander from Tunisia, known as Abu Ali Al-Tunisi, for whom the US Treasury Department had offered $5 million for information. ***—PTI***

TO MARK 2ND ANNIVERSARY

Masha Amini protest: Women in Iran ditch hijabs

DUBAI, 14 SEPT

On the streets of Iranian cities, it's becoming more common to see a woman passing by without a mandatory headscarf, or hijab, as the second anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini and the mass protests it sparked approaches.

There's no government official or study acknowledging the phenomenon, which began as Iran entered its hot summer months and power cuts in its overburdened electrical system became common.

But across social media, videos of people filming neighbourhood streets or just talking about a normal day in their life, women and girls can be seen walking past with their long hair out over their shoulders, particularly after sunset.

An Iranian woman flashes a victory sign in Iran on Saturday ***PHOTO: AP***

This defiance comes despite what United Nations investigators describe as "expanded repressive measures and policies" by Iran's theocracy to punish them — though there's been no recent catalysing event like Amini's death to galvanize demonstrators.

The country's new reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian campaigned on a promise to halt the harassment of women by morality police. But the country's ultimate authority remains the 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who in the past said "unveiling is both religiously forbidden and politically forbidden."

For some observant Muslim women, the head covering is a sign of piety before God and modesty in front of men outside their families. Amini, 22, died on 16 September, 2022, in a hospital after her arrest by the country's morality police over allegedly not wearing her hijab to the liking of the authorities.

A monthslong security crackdown that followed killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained. ***—AP***

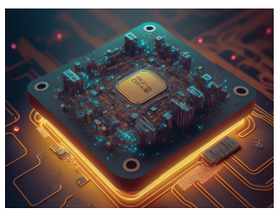


PHOTO: FREEPIK

'India must better ties with Taiwan, Japan for semicons'

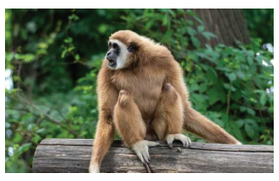
NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

India should deepen its partnerships with countries like Taiwan and Japan to strengthen its presence in the semiconductor ecosystem, says a report by research firm Elara Securities. Globally, Taiwan holds a dominant position in semiconductor manufacturing, with its companies accounting for 78 percent of the world's fab manufacturing and 53 percent of the assembly, testing, and packaging (ATMP) market. Over 312 Taiwanese firms lead this sector, but their involvement in India's nascent semiconductor industry remains limited. The report states that Japan is providing training to Indian workers, while Taiwan is investing in semiconductor clusters in Southeast Asia. *—ANI*

Hindustan Zinc's team to take part in i'ntl competition

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Zinc producer Hindustan Zinc Limited has said its all-women mine rescue team will represent India at an international competition. The country's first all-women mine rescue team will be among 26 teams at the XIII International Mine Rescue Competition to be organized by National Mining Agency, Colombia, under the guidance of the International Mines Rescue Body (IMRB). "Hindustan Zinc's team marks a historic breakthrough as the first-ever all-women team from India to compete on this prestigious global stage, demonstrating their exceptional rescue skills and expertise," said Arun Misra, CEO Hindustan Zinc Limited. The team will compete across six categories, including mine rescue drills in both breathing and non-breathing atmospheres, first aid, mining rescue skills, equipment tests. *—PTI*



Vedanta gets nod for drilling in Assam's sanctuary

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Union environment ministry has granted in-principle approval to divert around 4.50 hectares of forest land in Assam, home to the endangered hoolock gibbon, for oil and gas exploration by a Vedanta Group company. Cairn Oil & Gas will carry out exploratory oil drilling in the ecosensitive zone of the Hoollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Jorhat district, the sole habitat for India's only ape species. The ministry's Forest Advisory Committee approved the diversion of 4.49 hectares of forest land during a meeting on 27 August, according to minutes published on the Parivesh portal. On 8 August, Assam's principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) and chief wildlife warden recommended the clearance, saying that the project served "national interest". The project site is located within the ecosensitive zone of the sanctuary, an area also used by wild elephants to move between the sanctuary and the Dessoi Valley Reserve Forest, the official noted. The official assured that minimal tree felling would be done and no harm would come to the wildlife and their habitats. A wildlife conservation and human-animal conflict management plan with a budget of Rs 5.57 crore has also been submitted. Recommending the proposal for Stage-1 clearance, the ministry panel also directed the state government to adhere to the safety guidelines outlined in a parliamentary report on the Baghjan blowout incident of May 2020. *—PTI*

Govt's subsidised onion sale brings relief to cities

Govt initiated sale of onions at a subsidised rate of ₹35 per kg

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The government's subsidised onion sale initiative, launched on 5 September, has led to price drops in major cities within days, the consumer affairs ministry said on Saturday.

In Delhi, retail onion price fell from Rs 60 to Rs 55 per kg, while Mumbai saw a decrease from Rs 61 to Rs 56 per kg. In Chennai, the retail price reduced from Rs 65 to Rs 58 per kg, the ministry said in a statement.

The government initiated the sale of onions at a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg through mobile vans and outlets of NCCF and NAFED.

The program, which began in Delhi and Mumbai, has since expanded to other major cities including Chennai, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, and Guwahati.

Responding to the growing demand, the government has decided to increase the quantity of subsidised onion and expand distribution channels to include e-commerce platforms, Kendriya Bhandar outlets, and Mother Dairy's SAFAL stores.

The government has also initiated wholesale disposal of onion in major cities. It has already commenced in Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai, with plans to extend to Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata and eventually all state capitals.

A dual transportation strategy involving both road and rail networks is being implemented to improve logistics efficiency and reduce post-harvest losses.

The Department of Consumer Affairs is working closely with state governments to ensure targeted supply based on demand.

With a buffer stock of 4.7 lakh tonne of onions and increased kharif sowing area compared to the previous year, "the government expects onion prices to remain under control in the coming months," the ministry said.

The combination of enhanced retail and bulk sale strategies is anticipated to stabilize prices and ensure widespread availability of affordable onions, it added. *—PTI*

Labourers pack onions at a field near Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka **PHOTO: PTI**

'TO INCREASE INCOME'

Duty hike on crude, refined oils to benefit farmers

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

- Government had previously fixed $ 550 per tonne as the minimum export price (MEP), which essentially meant that farmers could not sell overseas

The government's decision to hike customs duty on crude palm and refined sunflower oil to 20 per cent and 32.5 per cent, respectively will "hugely" benefit farmers as it will increase their income, a senior official said on Saturday.

The government official also said that the decision to remove minimum export price and slashing of export duty on onion too would help farmers of the country.

According to a finance ministry notification, the basic customs duty on crude palm, soybean and sunflower seed oil has been increased from nil to 20 per cent.

Basic customs duty on refined palm, soybean and sunflower oil has been hiked from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent.

The effective duty on these crude and refined oils will increase from 5.5 per cent to 27.5 per cent and from 13.75 per cent to 35.75 per cent, respectively.

The official added that these measures were possible because of the effective management of the government to contain domestic prices of edible oil, which have been falling continuously for nearly two years now.

Besides Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the other major oil seed producing states are Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

The government had previously fixed USD 550 per tonne as the minimum export price (MEP), which essentially meant that farmers could not sell their produce overseas lower than this rate.

A Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notification issued on Friday removed the MEP with immediate effect.

The government has also slashed the duty on onion export to 20 per cent from 40 per cent. There is no export duty on 'Bengaluru rose onion.' *—PTI*

India's coal production surges by 5.85%, reaches 411.62 MT so far

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

The coal production in the country increased substantially during the fiscal year 2024-25, as per the Ministry of Coal.

As per the ministry data on Friday, the production reached a provisional total of 411.62 million tonnes (MT) by 12 September, 2024. This marks an impressive rise from the 388.86 MT produced during the same period last year, reflecting a growth rate of 5.85 per cent.

Despite facing adverse climatic conditions that hampered mining operations, the ministry stated that sector has shown remarkable resilience, achieving significant production milestones.

Coal India Limited (CIL), the major player in the coal sector, has also contributed to this growth. CIL's production rose to 311 MT during the fiscal year 2024-25, compared to 302.53 MT in the corresponding period of the previous year, recording a growth rate of 2.80 per cent.

The ministry said, "This marks a significant increase from the 388.86 MT produced during the same period last year, reflecting a commendable growth rate of 5.85 per cent, despite adverse climatic conditions that challenged mining operations."

In addition to the rise in production, the ministry noted that coal dispatch has also seen significant improvement. This upward trend is particularly evident in the coal supplied to power plants, which saw a 4.03 per cent increase, amounting to 362.65 MT. It highlights the coal sector's critical role in meeting India's growing energy demands and its commitment to ensuring an uninterrupted supply. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

RBI imposes penalty on three firms

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on three non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) for regulatory lapses and non-compliance with various RBI directives.

The RBI notifications on Friday highlighted that these penalties, issued between 3 September and 11 September, were levied on Hewlett Packard Financial Services (India) Private Limited, SMFG India Credit Company Limited, and Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance Limited.

On 3 September, the RBI imposed a penalty of Rs 10, 40,000 on Hewlett Packard Financial Services (India) Private Limited. This action was taken following an inspection by the RBI based on the company's financial position as of 31 March, 2022. The penalty was levied due to non-compliance with the 'Know Your Customer (KYC)' guidelines and other directives applicable to systemically important non-deposit-taking NBFCs.

As per RBI, during a control gap assessment in April 2023, it found that the company failed to include provisions for monitoring and oversight in its contracts with outsourced vendors, neglected to conduct IS audits for network and security systems, and did not retain critical audit logs.

On 11 September, Muthoot Vehicle & Asset Finance Limited was penalized Rs 7, 90,000 for failing to comply with RBI's liquidity risk management framework and other relevant guidelines.

In each case, the RBI clarified that the penalties were based solely on regulatory compliance deficiencies and were not judgments on the validity of any transactions or agreements. Further actions may be taken by the RBI against these companies if deemed necessary. *—ANI*

India to develop resilient agri systems: Minister

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

India is committed to developing resilient agricultural systems and ensuring food security on the global stage, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Ram Nath Thakur said.

He made the remarks while representing India at G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting in Cuiabá, Brazil on 12-14 September.

India also emphasised enhanced international trade's contribution to food security at the meeting.

"Our approach not only focuses on productivity but also ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability, enhancing farmer prosperity and embodying a comprehensive vision for development," an official statement quoted him as saying. The minister also pointed to India's implementation of "the world's largest food-based safety net programmes" to ensure food security and nutrition.

He stressed the need for Special and Differential Treatment for developing and least-developed countries, particularly to empower small and marginal fishers, the statement said.

The G20 meeting focused on four key priority areas -- sustainability of agriculture and food systems; enhancing international trade's contribution to food security. *—PTI*

Ram Nath Thakur **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Foreign investors pump ₹16,881 crore in to mkt

MUMBAI, 14 SEPT

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) continued their bullish stance on Indian stocks, infusing Rs 16,881.03 crore in the second week of September, according to data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

The data covers investments made between 9 September and 13 September. The highest inflow was recorded on Wednesday, 11 September, when FPIs invested a substantial Rs 2,962.44 crore into Indian stocks, signalling strong confidence in the country's equity markets.

This week's investment marked a continuation of the positive trend seen in the first week of September, during which FPIs made net investments totaling Rs 10,980 crore.

With the latest inflows, the total foreign investment in Indian equities for September now stands at Rs 27,861 crore, indicating robust interest from global investors.

The experts noted that the upcoming US federal meeting on rate cuts will remain a key focus point along with corporate earnings for both domestic and foreign investors.

The consistent FPI inflows reflect the increasing attractiveness of Indian markets, driven by strong economic fundamentals, improving corporate earnings, and positive global sentiment towards emerging markets.

Earlier, the net foreign investment in August in the Indian equity market declined to Rs 7,322 crore, marking the lowest monthly investment in the past three months.

This drop is particularly stark when compared to July, where foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had invested Rs 32,359 crore, according to data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

As per the data by NSDL, throughout August, foreign investors were largely net sellers in the Indian equity market. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India's household debts surge back on housing loans

NEW DELHI, 14 SEPT

Amid concerns about India's rising household debts, a recent report by Care Edge Ratings highlighted that the increase in household debt is primarily driven by a surge in housing loans, which constitute over 50 per cent of retail loans.

As per the report, as of FY23, India's household debt has reached 38 per cent of GDP, reflecting a growing trend in household leverage.

Although the report noted that this figure is lower than the peak of 39.2 per cent in FY21, it still remains significant, especially when compared to emerging economies like Brazil (35 per cent) and South Africa (34 per cent).

The report highlighted a notable rise in unsecured loans, including credit card debts but the increase in household debt is primarily driven by a surge in housing loans.

However, the report also highlighted that it has not impacted the overall gross household savings, it remained stable at around 24 per cent of GDP. The saving pattern shifted from bank deposits to physical assets, particularly in real estate.

In fact, the report highlighted that when households invest in real estate, it can boost public infrastructure efforts, creating a stronger positive impact on entire economy.

The report stated that while the current levels of household debt are manageable compared to peer economies, the rising trend in unsecured lending and household leverage close monitoring. *—ANI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE

'Google's ad auctions are focus of monopoly'

ALEXANDRIA, 14 SEPT

It happens in milliseconds, ideally, as you browse the web. Networks of computers and software analyse who you are, what you are looking at and buy and sell the advertisements you see on web pages.

The company that most likely determines which ads you get, and how much an advertiser paid to get on your screen, is Google.

In fact, the Justice Department and a coalition of states say Google's dominance over the technology that controls the sale of billions of Internet display ads every day is so thorough that it constitutes an illegal monopoly that should be broken up.

A trial under way in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, will determine if Google's ad tech stack constitutes an illegal monopoly. The first week has included a deep dive into exactly how Google's products work together to conduct behind-the-scenes electronic auctions that place ads in front of consumers in the blink of an eye.

Online advertising has rapidly evolved. Fifteen or so years ago, if you saw an internet display ad, there was a pretty good chance it featured people dancing over their enthusiasm for low mortgage rates, and those ads were foisted on you whether you were looking at real estate or searching for baseball scores.

Now, the algorithms that match ads to your interests are carefully calibrated, sometimes to an almost creepy extent.

Google, for its part, says it has invested billions of dollars to improve the quality of ads that consumers see, and ensure that advertisers can reach the consumers they're seeking.

The Justice Department contends that what Google has also done over the years is rig the automated auctions of ad sales to favor itself over other would-be players in the industry, and also deprived the publishing industry of hundreds of millions of dollars it would have received if the auctions were truly competitive.

Government witnesses have explained the auction process and how it has evolved over the years in detail at the Virginia trial.

Publishers naturally want to receive as high a price as possible for their ad space, but testimony at trial has shown that didn't always happen due to the rules Google imposed.

For years, Google gave its ad exchange, called AdX, the first chance to match a publisher's proposed floor price. *—PTI*

Google is a company that most likely determines which ads you get, and how much an advertiser paid to get on your screen **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

PHOTO: X

Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar Jr to lead Saudi clubs

WASHINGTON, 14 SEPT

The first edition of the AFC Champions League Elite begins Monday with stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar and Riyad Mahrez looking to lead their Saudi Arabian clubs to success in Asia. Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli are among the favorites to win next May's final and reinforce the ambitions of the Saudi Pro League of becoming one of the best in the world. In the summer transfer windows of 2023 and 2024, SPL clubs spent over $1 billion on transfers to bring top-level players from the big European leagues. Al-Hilal midfielder Ruben Neves joined Al-Hilal in 2023 from Wolverhampton Wanderers of the English Premier League for a fee of around $60 million and has no doubt that the SPL has enough quality. "I have said this a few times — if you compare my data from English football to Saudi football, I run even more, but with the difference that I run in 40 degrees," Neves said. *—PTI*

Theegala clinches 6th spot to defend Procore title

NAPA, 14 SEPT

Defending champion Sahith Theegala made amends for a first day card of 69 with an impressive 6-under 66 in the second round to rise to sixth place in the Procore Championship. Theegala, who was third in the just concluded FedEx Cup, is four shots behind the leader Patton Kizzire (66-65) at 13-under on the picturesque course in the heart of Napa Valley wine country. Kizzire shot a 7-under 65 for a one-stroke advantage over David Lipsky (65-67) at 12-under in the Procore Championship at Silverado. Kizzire had seven birdies, six on the back nine, as he eyes his first victory on the PGA Tour since 2018. Theegala was four shots back after a 66. Theegala, who played with Wyndham Clark and Max Homa, opened with a birdie but gave that back on the second. *—PTI*

Madrid halt concerts after neighbours complain about noise

MADRID, 14 SEPT

Real Madrid will temporarily stop holding concerts at its renovated Santiago Bernabeu Stadium after neighbours complained about the loud noise, the Spanish club said late Friday. Madrid said three concerts by Spanish pop artists will be pushed back from November to December, while the South Korean music show Music Bank scheduled for 12 October has been cancelled. The decision came after several local media reports of residents who live near the stadium complaining about the noise that reached their homes during concerts. The club said in a statement that "this decision forms part of a group of measures taken by the club to ensure that the municipal regulations are strictly complied with during concerts." *—AP*

ACT C'ships: India defeat Pak 2-1 to remain unbeaten

India tops the table with 15 points, Korea in fifth position

Indian players celebrate after scoring the second goal against Pakistan in Hulunbuir on Saturday *PHOTO: X/AIH*

HULUNBUIR, 14 SEPT

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh made the difference as he converted two penalty corners to hand unbeaten India a close 2-1 win over arch-rivals Pakistan in their final league match of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Saturday.

It was India's fifth consecutive win in the six-team round-robin competition. Pakistan took the lead through Ahmad Nadeem (8th minute) before Harmanpreet (13th, 19th) converted two penalty corners to lead India to win. It was Pakistan's first loss in this tournament.

Both India and Pakistan have already qualified for the semifinals. The victory also enabled India to maintain their supremacy over Pakistan since 2016. In their previous meeting at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, India thrashed Pakistan 10-2. A few months before that, the Indians beat Pakistan 4-0 during the Chennai edition of the ACT.

At the Asia Cup in Jakarta (2022), a relatively young Indian side held Pakistan to a 1-1 draw while at the 2021 ACT in Dhaka, India defeated Pakistan 4-3 to clinch the bronze medal. As like any Indo-Pak hockey match, the first quarter saw end-to-end action with both the teams giving their all to gain the bragging rights.

A stunned India kept up their composure and patiently built their attacks and secured their first penalty corner in the 13th minute and skipper Harmanpreet scored with a powerful drag-flick to the left of a hapless Pakistan goalkeeper Munneb.

Asustained spell of attacks helped Pakistanis to bag four penalty corners in quick succession but lacked the firepower to breach the Indian defence. In the last quarter, both the sides stitched relentless attacks and India secured three more penalty corners but failed to convert. *—PTI*

India	Match Stat	Pakistan
56%	Possession	44%
19	Circle entries	13
5	Penalty Corner	7
0	Field Goals	1

Korea hold Malaysia 3-3

In edge-of-the-seat action that went down to the wire, Korea scored a late goal to hold Malaysia to a 3-3 draw in a high-octane match here at the ongoing Asian Champions Trophy in Moqi Hockey Training Base, Hulunbuir, China on Saturday. Korea remained at No.3 on the points table while Malaysia continued to stay on no.4. With weekend crowds arriving to the stadium early for the last day of the league matches, Korea and Malaysia lived up to the billing with both teams fighting it out till the last hooter. *—PTI*

Tilak's tons put India A in dominating place

ANANTAPUR, 14 SEPT

Tilak Varma and Pratham made smooth hundreds to drive India A to a commanding position against India D after the third day of their Duleep Trophy match here on Saturday.

Varma did no harm to his ambitions of keeping himself visible in the India scheme of things with an unbeaten 111 (193 balls, 9x4), while Pratham made an impressive 122 (189 balls, 12x4, 1x6) as India A

declared their second innings closed at 380 for three.

It gave them an overall lead of 487, and India D has chiselled off 62 from the target of 488 for the loss of Atharva Taide.

Pratham, who resumed from the overnight 59, continued to play fluently and reached his 100 in 149 balls in the first session itself.

But the 32-year-old Railways batter fell to left-arm spinner Saurabh Kumar close to the end of the opening session. Pratham added 104 runs for the second wicket with Varma.

However, Varma, who was once rated by Rohit Sharma as India's next all-format player, held his end up well remaining unbeaten on 60, having brought up his fifty a bit earlier off 96 balls. India A took lunch at a solid 260 for two after starting the day from 115 for one. *—PTI*

Brief Scores

India A: 290 all out and 380 for 3 declared in 98 overs (Pratham Singh 122, Tilak Varma 111 not out, Shashwat Rawat 64 not out) vs India D: 183 all out and 62/1 in 19 overs (Ricky Bhui batting 44). *—PTI*

Slain Ugandan Olympian buried with military honours

Residents, officials and relatives gathered on Saturday *PHOTO: X*

BUKWO, 14 SEPT

Dozens of mourners in Uganda paid respects to Rebecca Cheptegei, the Olympic athlete who died last week in Kenya after her partner set her on fire.

Local leaders and others gathered at the local administration hall Saturday as they awaited her burial at her ancestral home in a village near the Kenya border. Cheptegei died after her body suffered 80% burns in the attack by Dickson Ndiema, who doused her in gasoline at her home in western Kenya's Trans-Nzoia County on 3 September. Ndiema sustained 30 per cent burns on his body and later succumbed to his injuries.

According to a report filed by the local chief, they quarreled over a piece of land the athlete bought in Kenya. The horrific gasoline attack shocked many and strengthened calls for the protection of female runners facing exploitation and abuse in the East African country.

Cheptegei's body was returned to Uganda Friday in a somber procession following a street march by dozens of activists in the western Kenyan town of Eldoret who demanded an end to physical violence against female athletes. *—AP*

US beats Slovakia for spot in Davis Cup Finals last 8

ZHUHAI, 14 SEPT

The United States secured its place in the last eight of the Davis Cup Finals after beating Slovakia 3-0, a result that also sent unbeaten Germany through from the same group.

Spain joined them when four-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz beat France's Ugo Humbert 6-3, 6-3. Veteran Roberto Bautista Agut won the first singles against Arthur Fils 2-6, 7-5, 6-3 in Valencia.

Spain's victory also put Australia through from Group B. In Zhuhai, America's Mackenzie McDonald converted four of his six break points to beat Slovakia's Lukas Klein 6-4, 6-3, and Davis Cup debutant Brandon Nakashima had eight aces in a 6-3, 6-3 win against Jozef Kovalik.

The US also won the doubles: Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram, who lost the men's doubles final at the Paris Olympics last month, rallied to beat Klein and Norbert Gombos 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 10-1, winning 15 of the last 16 points. Italy kept its defense alive by beating Belgium 2-1 indoors in Bologna. *—AP*

ISL: Venkatesh's goal helps BFC edge past East Bengal

BENGALURU, 14 SEPT

Vinith Venkatesh takes a long-range shot during the match in Shree Kanteerava stadium, Bengaluru *PHOTO: X/@BENGALURUFC*

Bengaluru FC started their Indian Super League campaign with a 1-0 win over East Bengal with 19-year-old Vinith Venkatesh scoring in his debut match here on Saturday.

Venkatesh's 25th-minute strike was the difference between the two teams. It was a fairytale ISL debut for Bengaluru FC academy graduate Venkatesh. He showed glimpses of his brilliance in the recently concluded Durand Cup and carried that momentum into the new ISL season.

It was a cagey start from both sides with plenty of tackles flying in, mostly to disrupt the momentum. Nandha Kumar was guilty of a mis-timed challenge in the third minute when he brought down Suresh Wangjam. The East Bengal FC winger received a yellow card for his reckless tackle.

Despite the caution, tackles kept flying as Lalchungnunga and later Hector Yuste also joined Nandha into the referee's book. The first real opportunity of the game came when Jeakson Singh collected a loose ball outside the penalty area. He launched a thumping effort towards the goal, forcing Gurpreet Singh Sandhu to come up with his best to thwart away the danger.

Six minutes later, Bengaluru FC had an opportunity of their own when Roshan Singh picked Mohammed Rakip's pocket in a dangerous area, starting a counterattack. He squared the ball to Edgar Mendez in space, probably expecting a return pass from the Spaniard. But the experienced striker decided to test Prabhsukhan Gill from long range.

Strikes by Farukh Choudhary and Daniel Chima Chukwu helped Chennaiyin FC halt the long unbeaten streak at home of Odisha FC with a come-from-behind 3-2 win. *—PTI*

CHESS OLYMPIAD

India men dropped their first point, but carried enough steam to beat Hungary 'B' 3.5-0.5 to maintain a clean slate on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Indian men outwit Hungary B; Women go past Switzerland

BUDAPEST, 14 SEPT

India men dropped their first point, but carried enough steam to beat Hungary 'B' 3.5-0.5 to maintain a clean slate in the ongoing 45th Chess Olympiad here.

In the open section, the hero for the Indian men was Arjun Erigaise who played a brilliant attacking game against Peter Prohazska and ended with a checkmate after a queen sacrifice. However, Vidit Gujrathi had to settle for a quick draw against Papp Gabor and it was the first time an Indian men's player failed to notch a win in this event.

But D Gukesh outclassed Adam Kozak, while R Praggnanandhaa made most of his chances in the endgame as Tamas Banusz was gradually outplayed. Earlier, a shock defeat for D Harika on the top board did not deter the other Indian girls as R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agarwal scored crushing victories to ensure a 3-1 victory for the team that kept them in joint lead on six match points.

Harika lost to recent-migrant Alexandra Kosteniuk who gave up her Russian citizenship and joined the Swiss team. A former world women's champion Kosteniuk was in her elements and scored the full point after Harika misplayed the middle game that appeared even from the bird's eye-view.

The Indian men will take on Serbia in the next round. With Alexandr Predke and Alexey Sarana on the top two boards, the Indians will likely have a tough fight on hands even though they still are favourites to win the match.

In the women's section too, there are 16 teams sharing the lead with six points each. In the fourth round the Indian eves are pitted against France and should be able to breakthrough as they are likely to be rating favourites on all four boards. *—PTI*

INDIAN RESULTS: ROUND 3

WOMEN

Alexandra Kosteniuk beat D Harika; R Vaishali beat Ghazal Hakimifard; Sofiia Hryzlova lost to Divya Deshmukh; Vantika Agrawal beat Mariia Manko.

MEN

D Gukesh beat Adam Kozak; Tamas Banusz lost to R Praggnanandhaa; Arjun Erigaise beat Peter Prohazska; Papp Gabor drew with Vidit Gujrathi.

ENGLISH PREMIERE LEAGUE

Garnacho seals Manchester United win at Southampton

LONDON, 14 SEPT

Finally, Erik ten Hag could enjoy a game without the kind of jeopardy that had stalked his Manchester United so far this season. Four games into the season Ten Hag appeared embattled but after an awkward opening half hour, well-taken goals by Matthijs de Ligt and Marcus Rashford helped United pull away to victory with uncharacteristic ease. The substitute Alejandro Garnacho capped the scoring in style, lashing United's third into the net in the 96th minute.

Southampton did not muster a shot on goal from the moment Cameron Archer's rebound from a 33rd-minute missed penalty ended up in the gloves of André Onana and, to make matters worse for the Saints, Jack Stephens was shown a straight red card for a high challenge on Garnacho. It was a near-perfect day for Ten Hag, who introduced Manuel Ugarte late on for his United debut. On this occasion the full-time boos were not directed at Ten Hag.

By the same notion that Southampton's supporters jeered Russell Martin's decision to withdraw Tyler Dibling 63 minutes into his first Premier League start maybe points towards their problems. The 18-year-old, who Martin predicts will become "an incredible player" is the latest academy gem and he shone in patches and finished as the overwhelming redeeming light from a fourth successive league defeat. Welcome back to the Premier League and all that.

This was the day that Arne Slot found out that the Premier League is not all fun and games, as Liverpool and their manager were outwitted by Nuno Espírito Santo and Nottingham Forest. It was the first defeat of the Dutchman's Anfield career after Callum Hudson-Odoi downed the hosts with a trademark goal.

Everything Nuno did came off from his tactics, team selection and substitutions. His gritty side followed their manager's instructions to the letter to keep Liverpool at bay for 90 minutes and conjured up numerous counterattacks, with Hudson-Odoi eventually finishing one to earn the points after coming off the bench to give Forest their first win at Anfield since 1969.

For Manchester City it is another win, however, no hat-trick for Erling Haaland, who has a bit of a face on, but three points are an adequate consolation. Yoane Wissa put Brentford ahead inside 25 seconds, and they had further chances before City woke up. When they did, Haaland did the necessary.

—Courtesy, The Guardian

Garnacho celebrates after scoring the winning goal against Southampton on Saturday *PHOTO: X/@MANUTD*

DORTMUND GO TOP WITH 4-2 WIN OVER HEIDENHEIM

BERLIN, 14 SEPT

Heidenheim's dream rise to the top of the Bundesliga came to an abrupt halt after losing at Borussia Dortmund 4-2.

Heidenheim was the surprise league leader after two wins in its first two games but it was overcome by a home side which had Karim Adeyemi in fine form.

The win took Borussia ahead of its opponent and into first place in the Bundesliga.

Adeyemi set up Donyell Malen to curl in a lovely opener after just 11 minutes, and then six minutes later he got his own name on the scoresheet when Julian Brandt set him up with a neat back-heeled pass. *—AP*